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SOCCER

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Parramatta Power's hardworking midfielder, Milan Blagojevic (left) holds off the challenge of a Sydney United player during their clash at the Sydney United Sports Centre.

Now It's The French That Chase Olympic

($1million plus deal)

By John Economos

Sydney Olympic, having been hounded over the past two months by England Premier League side Leeds United, now suddenly finds itself also targetted by a French First Division outfit, rumoured to be A.S. Monaco.

However a Sydney Olympic official, who wished not to be named, informed ABSW last night:

"The deal is not an attempted 'buy-in' as such, along the lines of the Leeds' deal.

"It's a cash-rich sponsorship proposition that has been put in front of us.

"The whole deal is totally different by nature and in character.

"The French are not interested in any form of direct ownership or taking control of our management.

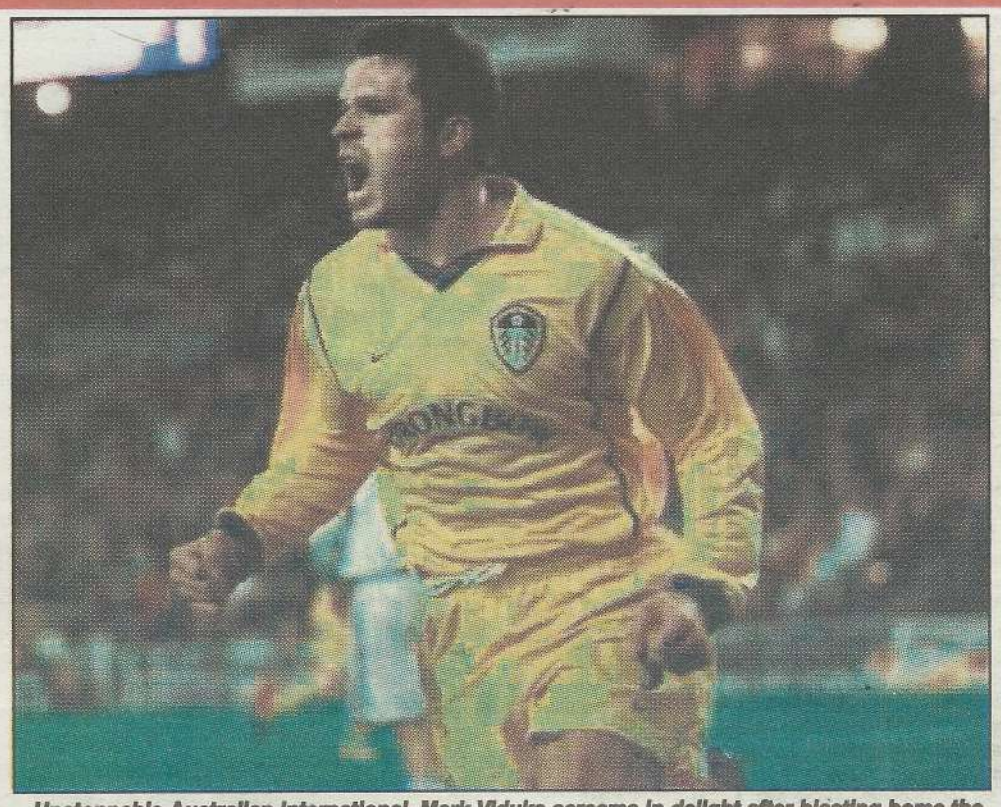
"It's structured along the lines of a mega-sponsorship deal giving the French people outright first option, and a direct free choice, of any one of our NSL players, (one player per season), to sign up with them on a free transfer."

It's also strongly believed that there is another French team as well, interested in becoming involved with Sydney Olympic.

However it's understood that two of the four 'White Knights', (majority shareholders of Sydney Olympic), are now reluctant to consider any deal with anyone, until after the NSL Grand Final is played.

Olympic's bargaining position would understandably be greatly strengthened should the Club ultimately become League Champions of Australia.

Marvellous Mark!



Unstoppable Australian International, Mark Viduka screams in delight after blasting home the opening goal for his English club, Leeds United over the weekend. The 9th second goal set a record as the fastest goal ever scored in the history of the English premiership.

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Croatian ex-international, Alojsa Asanovic who is billed to appear briefly for Sydney United.

World Cup star laces boots for Sydney United

World Cup 1998 bronze medallist and Euro 96 Quarter Finalist, Croatian International, Alojsa Asanovic will join Sydney United for two special guest appearances on Sunday April 22, against Sydney Olympic and Sunday April 29 against the Kingz.

Asanovic retired from international football in May last year playing in a friendly replay of the 1998 World Cup semi-final against France.

He is the second most-capped player in full A internationals for Croatia.

Asanovic has made 62 appearances for Croatia (56 A Internationals), one less than retired goalkeeper Drazen Ladic. He was also the first player to score a goal for Croatia in an international, after the country became independent against the USA in 1990.

Over the course of his career he has played with such prominent European teams such as Derby County (England), Napoli (Italy), Real Valladolid (Spain) and Hajduk Split (Croatia).

Unlike the guest players of recent times, who were not even playing top flight football, Asanovic at 35 years of age is still a prominent figure on the European football scene, currently playing in the Austrian first division for Vienna..

Asanovic will not only be playing two matches for Sydney United but he will also be opening the Sydney United Soccer Academy whilst in Sydney.

"Everyone at the club is excited that a player of Alojsa Asanovic's standard will be coming to play for the club. He is the biggest name to come from Europe and play for Sydney United since Vedran Rozic in the 1980's.

However, his arrival is still over a month away and we must concentrate on matters closer to hand such as this Sunday's match against Parramatta," stated coach Velimir Kupresak.

"As soon as he was approached to come to Australia and play he was ecstatic. He is looking forward to coming and playing in the NSL and opening the Sydney United Soccer Academy. Asanovic is a very capable player as is proved by his magnificent performances in the last World Cup.

Everyone is looking forward to him coming to play in the Sydney United colours," stated General Manager Drago Zulj.

ALOJSA ASANOVIC PROFILED

Date of Birth: .....14th December, 1965
Place of Birth: .....Split, Croatia
Position: .....Midfielder
Appearances: .....62, 56 A Internationals

The second highest appearances for Croatia behind Drazen Ladic 57, other most capped players are Robert Jarni 55, Davor Suker 52 and Zvonimir Boban 50.

Goals: 4
Scorer of the first ever goal for Croatia in 1990 against USA.

Past Clubs: .....Hajduk Split, Croatia .....(1984-90 & 1994-95), ...FC Metz, France (1990/91), FC Cannes, France (1991/92), FC Montpellier, France 1992-94), Real Valladolid, Spain (1995/96), Derby County, England (1996-98), Napoli, Italy (1998), FC Panathinaikos, Greece (1998-2000), FC Austria Wien, Austria (2000/2001).

Cosmos In Dark over Rakic's Germany Deal

By Graham Cooke

Canberra Cosmos officials were still awaiting word from Andy Rakic after the news that the young midfielder had signed a contract with Eintracht Frankfurt for the next Bundesliga season.

The assumption was that Rakic would fly back to Australia directly after completing the formalities in Germany, and would have been available for selection for the game with South Melbourne at the weekend.

At first that seemed academic after Canberra's two successive home wins over Newcastle United and Wollongong Wolves, especially as new coach Mike Milovanovic has yet to see Rakic in action, but the Cosmos has hit a run of injuries and the 20-year-old's services would come in handy, if only on the bench.

Rakic's non-appearance is not going to endear him to Cosmos management, who were unhappy about his abrupt mid-season departure.

However, the player's manager, Danny Himbrechts, was adamant this was an opportunity not to be missed.

Andy Rakic: Keeping Canberra in the dark.

Pangallo's death shocks Canberra

By Graham Cooke

The ACT soccer community was in shock last week after the death of Tony Pangallo (24) in a road accident.

While his own playing career had been curtailed by injury, Pangallo remained active in soccer and had played a key role in assisting Andy Rakic, the younger brother of his great friend, John Rakic, to play overseas.

I saw him for the last time at the Canberra Cosmos game with Wollongong Wolves the day before his death when he said Rakic was on the verge of signing for Eintracht Frankfurt in the German Bundesliga.

He was excited at the prospect and said he and Danny Himbrechts, who was acting as Rakic's agent in Europe, were forming a partnership and he planned to make an application to FIFA to become a registered players' agent. His last words were that there was another player "in the pipeline" and he would be in touch.

I first met Pangallo a decade ago when, as a youth team player for Monaro in the NSW League, he would come up to the press box at the Marco Polo Ground to watch the first-team fixture. The box was supposed to be out of bounds to all but the media and the ground announcer, but no one had the heart to throw out the polite and friendly youngster.

Not to be confused with the former ACT Player of the Year, who has the same name, Pangallo's own very promising career was cut short by a series of injuries, but soccer remained one of his great loves and as the years went by he was often to be seen around the grounds where his cheerful and optimistic personality brightened many a gloomy winter afternoon.

The son of the Mayor of Queanbeyan, Frank Pangallo, he helped with his father's unsuccessful campaign to enter State Parliament as an Independent at the last election. He worked as a contract administrator for the Canberra branch of Schiavello Commercial Interiors where his immediate boss was the former NSL and NSW League player, Luciano Fabrizio.

There was a feeling, shared by many in the past week, that Tony Pangallo would have made a success of anything he turned his hand to.

"He was always busy, full of ideas, full of life," one mourner said. The talk continually returned to the loss of a fine young man who would have made a great contribution to society in the years ahead.

We are all the losers, Tony. Rest in peace.

Horvat settles for Holland

By Bert van Bedaf

Socceroo defender Steve Horvat is set to join Dutch first division club FC Utrecht at the end of the NSL season.

Horvat returned to Melbourne to take his place with the Melbourne Knights against Sydney Olympic after a world trip that took him to Utrecht, then to Colombia with the Socceroos and to the USA, where he held talks with Major League Soccer club San Jose Earthquakes.

Steve Horvat

But the trials at Utrecht were successful and a chance again to play in Europe more advantageous to keeping his spot in the Australian team than going to the USA.

"We're talking details and the offer is going to be for next season.

Playing in Holland will increase my chances to get into the world Cup squad," Horvat said.

Meanwhile, Eastern Pride utility Marcus Stergiopoulos has taken up an offer to play for Colombus Crew in the MLS.

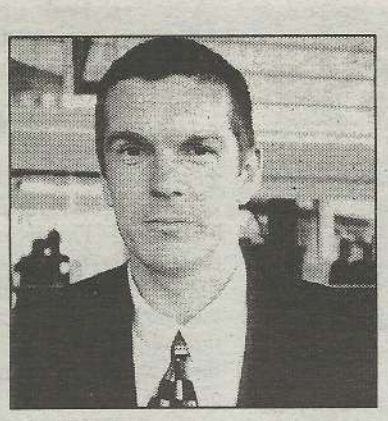
Bert van Bedaf

Victorian League looms for Pride

Stripped off its NSL points last Tuesday and fully restored to 16 points by Soccer Australia chairman Tony Labbozetta the following day, Eastern Pride earned another point from its 2-2 draw with Melbourne Knights last Saturday night, while its long suffering members are wondering what on earth will happen to their club in the future.

The club failed to pay its $50,000 affiliation fee for the 2000-2001 season and Soccer Australia brought the bottom club back to zero points.

But Labbozetta, who is also chairman of the league, has given the club an extension of payment until the end of the month and restored its competition points.



Jeff Hopkins: Eastern Pride coach

The dented Pride also owes its players wages and has accumulated other debts. It is in huge strife and unlikely to make the cut for next season.

The idea of returning to the Victorian Premier League has already been contemplated. The Pride entered the NSL as Morwell Falcons in the 1992-93 season from the VPL, having won the Victorian title in 1989.

"If we can't afford to be in the national league, we'll go back to the premier league. At least we'll have a product we can afford," long-time Pride member Damian Tripodi said.

Meanwhile, about a hundred members, including life members, are concerned the club will be sold from under them and a tradition of soccer in the LaTrobe valley will die with it.

A member for 28 years and a former media liaison officer, Tripodi has been seeking answers to a host of questions, but the answers aren't forthcoming.

Members are particularly concerned about the sale of the club's freehold, which was built by volunteers with the land bought by the club's former strongman and ex-Soccer Australia commissioner Don Di Fabrizio.

"We accept the soccer club needs an equity partner. Without an equity partner the club won't survive (in the NSL). But we have concerns when it comes to selling the ground (and social club) for a pittance to an unknown Queensland company," Tripodi said.

"This ground was built by voluntary labor. The club has a great tradition. It was built by Italians to be shared by everybody. It is a bastion of multiculturalism in the valley. The club has given the valley a national profile.

"Members don't want the club to be sold, but we appear to have no way of blocking it. If we could, we would. There's a lot of dissatisfaction among members. A lot of questions have been asked but no answers have been given.

"When the club was restructured two years ago, business people were willing to invest in what was then the Gippsland Falcons and wanted a say in the club. We embraced their investment and involvement without fully knowing what would be happening in the future and the club has gone backwards since then," he said.

The Falcons, renamed Eastern Pride before the start of the season, passed into private ownership of directors Peter Quirk, John Buhagiar and Fred Di Sipio two seasons ago. It appears there's a serious falling out between the directors. Quirk, who is also chief executive, and Buhagiar were not sighted at the club last Saturday night, while Di Sipio was present, according to members at the match.

"The club went into voluntary administration (about two years ago) and by mid-1999 the debt was almost wiped off. Why is there such a huge debt now? It is something close to $1 million," Tripodi said.

"The LaTrobe City Council is owed close to $500,00 and they've demanded about $300,000 of it back. The board said it had paid the council.

It said in a newsletter that the club did 'not owe anything to anyone'.

This was not true," he said.

According to local newspaper reports, the probable buyer of the Pride complex is Australian Club and Hospitality Services (ACHS). Under an arrangement with the local council ACHS 'must clear a debt of around $320,000' and 'seek an alternative payment method (for) the remaining $160,000'. Quirk later said council had agreed to defer payment.

Tripodi was also disappointed in the negotiations with Melbourne businessman Tony Schiavello, who made a bid to buy the club but let the offer lapse.

"The offer was offensive. The club asked for $3 million, but it probably would have settled for $1,5 million. The offer was in the low hundreds of thousands," Tripodi said.

He was also unhappy with the way Soccer Australia has been handling the affair. Australia's bungling soccer body was unable to assist in keeping Carlton alive last year and now it is presiding over the demise of another NSL club by the end of the season.

"Soccer Australia has a lot to answer for," Tripodi commented.

NSW, Reggina force Victoria into frenzied build-up

Hard on the heels of last week's announcement that a Victorian state select side will take on Italian visiting club Reggina, the Victorian Soccer Federation announced its fixture of a Victorian side playing New South Wales, also in June.

While Fab Incantalupo will coach Victoria against the Italians, last season's Victorian coach of the year and Heidelberg United coach Peter Ollerton will coach the Big V against NSW.

In other words, Victoria now has two state teams and two state coaches for two different games, one staged by a private organiser and another officially sanctioned by the VSF.

The team playing Reggina will comprise Victorian players from both the NSL and the Victorian Premier League. The side to play NSW will only exist of players currently in the premier league.

Organiser of the Reggina tour, Lou Sticca said the announcement of the tour (and the Victorian match) was a bit premature.

"The whole thing has been let out of the bag a touch early. We still have difficulty confirming the tour. We are still a couple of weeks away from it being confirmed. It is a bit too premature to discuss anything," Sticca said.

Fab Incantalupo - Victorian head coach.

Reggina's relegation battle in Serie A is casting doubts over the timing of the tour. Recent results has put Reggina back in contention to stay up in Italy's premier division. A fight to survive in the top league would involve playoffs, which would delay its Australian tour, Sticca explained.

Sticca said VSF chairman Manny Galanos supported the Reggina tour. "I suggested to Manny (Galanos) to resurrect the Victorian concept and he is enthusiastic of it," Sticca said.

He also said the Victorian team to take on Reggina would be a private undertaking. "If it goes ahead, it will be private," said Sticca, who declined to name the organiser, saying he wanted to keep it "private at this stage".

Meanwhile, the VSF announced its match against NSW will be held on June 2 at Melbourne's outer-suburban Epping stadium.

The interstate clash will become an annual event, with Victoria visiting NSW next year.

VSF chief executive, Geoff Miles announced the match and coaches.

"We are delighted to have Peter Ollerton to coach our Victorian team.

The assistant coach will be Ian Greener, the VSF's coaching and development manager," Miles said.

"We're looking forward to the rivalry. We hope we can involve not only NSW but also South Australia," team manager Vasko Stojcevski said.

Stojcevski, who is also VPL chairman and deputy chairman of the VSF board of commissioners, declined to comment on the privately organised Reggina tour and its Victorian side, preferring to stick to the match against NSW.

"A NSW Super League team will play an equivalent team of Victorian Premier League players. The Reggina match is something they want to do. It hasn't come through yet. Our team will be a VPL team. Theirs will be a private side. Peter Ollerton will have a premier league state team in place capable of being competitive," Stojcevski said.

The match at Epping is expected to attract a strong crowd and to encourage a healthy attendance the VSF intends to keep tickets at low cost.

"I'll be recommending tickets at $5 to attract a good crowd," Stojcevski said.

LABBOZZETTA REPRIEVE FOR PRIDE

New Soccer Australia Chairman Tony Labbozzetta enginnered a deal with the cash-strapped Eastern Pride to retain its NSL point, 24 hours after the club was stripped off all its competition points for failure to pay $50,0000 in affiliation fees for the 2000-2001 season.

However Labbozzetta, who also doubles as chairman of the league executive, negotiated a stay on the decision until the Soccer Australia board reconvenes at the end of the month.

The Pride, which is defaulting in player payments and is one of the clubs tipped for the axe in a restructured league next season, was also to lose any future league points under the ruling.

However, in a victory for commonsense Eastern Pride has been given until the end of the month to pay the outstanding debt.

Pride chief executive officer, Peter Quirk said the club had to guarantee that the money would be paid by then and the points would be restored.

The trouble is Quirk hasn't made contact with all club directors to give that guarantee, however he said it would be no problem.

"I can't see why we wouldn't want to do it," Quirk said. The club has sold its social club to enable it to pay players but is still waiting for the deal to be signed.

The Pride's joint owners have been courting investors in a bid to secure the club's future in a restructured competition next season.

Kasey Wehrman (right) In trouble at Perth Glory.

Glory fine whinging Wehrman

By Richard Kreider

Glory General Manager Roger Lefort last week confirmed the Management of Perth Glory fully supported the decision by Coaches, Bernd Stange and Mich d'Avray to omit Kasey Wehrman from the squad that faced Northern Spirit due to the non-acceptance of a directive for the Socceroo midfielder to travel to the match on the team bus.

Wehrman will be reprimanded and receive an appropriate fine in line with that specified in Soccer Australia's Collective Agreement.

"In any sporting organisation a coach's word is final and in disobeying that instruction, the player invited a reaction,î said Lefort.

"Assistant coach d'Avray was the recipient of a foul and abusive telephone call from Kasey Wehrman the day after the match," Lefort said. "As a result of Wehrman's actions, he was not considered for selection to travel to South Australia for the game against Adelaide City Force. "This is the latest in a series of incidents affecting Wehrman including his non-attendance at a Press conference a fortnight ago," said Lefort. "Further financial penalties will be imposed for these offences. Glory has attempted to instil a professional attitude to all its operations. Our players are well-paid, full-time employees and we expect a commensurate standard of behaviour and adherence to the Coach's instructions."

Wehrman first aggravated the Glory office in December last year by ignoring Glory demands to return to Perth after failing to impress European clubs Liese of Belgium and Dutch giants PSV Eindhoven in a series of trials.

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The Good Oil ... The Good Oil ...

By John Economos

WOLLONGONG WOLVES' crushing 9-4 win over a hapless Newcastle United last Friday night at Brandon Park, has served some serious notice to other League Championship aspirants that they are in no mood to relinquish their title of current Champions.

Despite having to battle against a depleted Newcastle, and having already streaked to a 6-0 lead at Brandon Park, the Wolves still appeared to have a merciless look about them.

But that lasted only until Wollongong coach Ronnie Corry signalled that he was taking his foot off the pedal the moment he hooked his steel 'enforcer' George Souris.

And speaking of players, Wollongong's young industrious midfielder Paul Reid seems to be rapidly gaining status that will in the near future force national boss Frank Farina to seriously start looking at him.

Sure Newcastle hit back with four goals, but the game was well and truly over with almost 30 minutes still left on the clock.

English striker Stuart Young, with monotonous regularity since his arrival in NSW from Singapore, just keeps showing what a high quality marksman he really is.

Stuart Young: Wollongong's super-intelligent striker.

Forget about his bag of goals he has stacked up in the League, just focus on his magnificent attitude and peripheral vision.

What a joy it must be for Petrovski and Chipperfield to have him alongside them.

●●●●

SOUTH MELBOURNE on Friday 30th is staging its annual Grand Gala Auction for the year at the 'Albert By The Lake'.

Kick-off time is 7.00pm sharp when pre-dinner drinks will be served.

Luxurious and classy items have been billed as being put up for bidding.

Entertainment will come in the form of Special Guest, 'Wogboy Star' Con Kilias who will act as the M.C. for the evening.

All inclusive tickets to this bright evening cost $55.

●●●●

WHO was the NSL Club official that recently, (seconds after fulltime at his Club's home game), most heatedly yelled out to a group of people standing inside the Players' tunnel:

"All players, coaches and officials, should resign from this game"???

Strange.

Very strange, because many heard him yet NOBODY knew why he barked that message out.

●●●●

WHO WAS the first Aussie, but NOT born in Australia, that played at Wembley Stadium in an F.A. Cup Final?

If you don't know, see end of this column.

●●●●

AS previously announced, WORLD CUP 2002 tickets have now gone on sale.

FIFA has designed a new ticket for fans around the globe.

The new 'Team Specific Tickets' (TST), give the fans the opportunity to buy tickets to see and follow their own team all the way through to the Final, should that team ultimately qualifies.

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●●●●

The Old Wembley Stadium

PERTH GLORY's dynamic strike duo, Bobby Despotovski and Damian Mori, each scored again last weekend in the Glory's 4-6 win over Adelaide City.

The League's joint-top goalscorers have now lifted their season tally to 16 goals apiece.

The Spirit's lanky target-man, Ben Burgess, in second spot with 14 goals, has now been joined by Wollongong Wolves' striker Saso Petrovski who cracked in a hat-trick last Friday night against Newcastle United.

Archie Thompson: Marconi's marksman, 12 goals to date.

Scott Chipperfield, Archie Thompson and Stuart Young are all locked in third position with 12 goals each.

●●●●

PAUL TRIMBOLI, South Melbourne's mercurial captain, last Sunday night played his 394 th game in the NSL at the Bob Jane Stadium against the Canberra Cosmos.

'Trimmers' scored his 109th NSL goal last Wednesday night in Brisbane where the Strikers defeated Souths' 3-2.

Being six games short of 400 matches in the NSL, Trimboli now is in outright fourth position on the 'All Time NSL Games Played Table'.

The top section of the table is:

Alex Tobin	456 games.
Sergio Melta	445.
Mike O'Shea	406.
TRIMBOLI	394.
Theo Selemidis	393.
Robbie Hooker	378
Gary Phillips	377.
Danny Wright	353.
Graham Jennings	351.
John Markovski	349.

●●●●

WELL the pathetic treatment of Australian Soccer continued yet again last Friday night by two of the leading NSW-based radio stations.

In past weeks 'Good Oil' had drawn attention as to how two of Sydney's leading stations refused to broadcast any Soccer results on their Friday night hourly news bulletins and the same on Saturday evenings.

Well surprise, surprise last Friday night we heard an improvement.

Barely though.

Yes there were three NSL matches played on Friday night, and yes, all three got a 'mention' on the stations' news service.

Mention that is. Not results.

Soccer was given TWO seconds of air time.

When the Sports results were broadcast, at the very end, the female announcer, read out.....

"And in tonight's NSLmatches, The Kingz, Wollongong and Perth Glory all won their games." Full stop. End of story.

No scores. No opponents. Just the three winners.

Great.

●●●●

LINDSAY WILSON, Sydney Olympic's right wingback, last Sunday night racked up his 100th match in the NSL against the Brisbane Strikers.

Although the 21 year old Wilson didn't score at the Belmore Sports Ground to celebrate his 'Century', he did give an explosive second half display that largely contributed to his team's valuable 2-0 win over the stubborn young Strikers.

It's expected that Wilson's name could be included in the first Australian World Cup squad for next month's Oceania qualifiers to be announced sometime later this week by national coach Frank Farina.

Meanwhile Wilson's team-mate and goalkeeper, Clint Bolton, also last Sunday, knocked up his 200th game in the NSL against his former Club, the Brisbane Strikers.

Bolton was able to celebrate his 'Double Ton' by keeping a clean-sheet against his old Club.

Seven minutes from the break last Sunday, Bolton pulled off a splendid save to deny Brisbane's midfielder Wayne Srhoj a 'deadlock-breaker'.

Prior to joining Olympic this season, the 25 year old Bolton played seven years with the Queenslanders.

●●●●

FULL credit must be extended to Jeff Hopkins' lads at the Eastern Pride.

Following last week's absolute turmoil when the Pride was first stripped of all their League points by Soccer Australia for debts owing, then later in the week having all the points restored,

Dean Fak: The Pride's tenacious defender.

the Pride last Saturday valiantly battled on to be rewarded with a tough 2-2 draw against the extra tough Melbourne Knights.

With seconds ticking away towards fulltime at Mobil Park, the Pride trailed 1-2.

But the never-say-die and tenacious defender Dean Fak, pushed up into attack and slammed home a rebound after midfielder Ante Deak had blasted one in from 15 metres.

●●●●

Lindsay Wilson: Olympic's right wingback racked up his 'Century'.

Paul Trimboli: Souths' skipper six games short of 400.

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The Good Oil ... The Good Oil

SCOTT BAILLIE, Sydney Olympic's popular central defender, who again is having a great season turned 31 years of age last week.

Wollongong's striker Saso Petrovski nailed in his second hat-trick of the season, hitting the target in the 42, 48 and 60th minutes.

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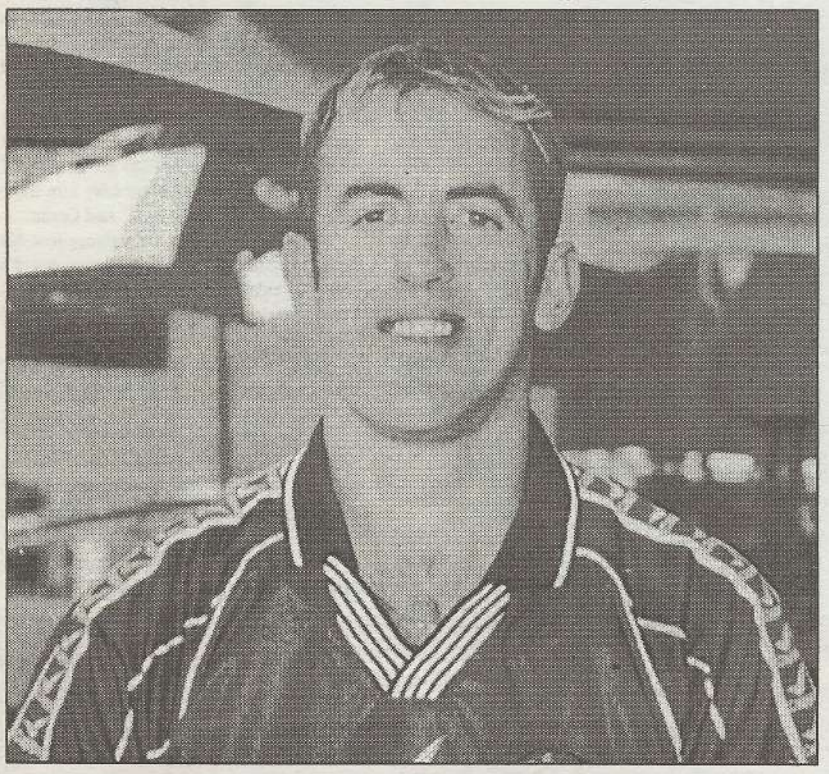

Scott Baillie: Sydney Olympic's central marker.

His girlfriend Samantha staged a party for Scotty last Friday night which saw virtually the whole Olympic squad turn up.

"It was great," Scotty assured 'Good Oil' last Sunday night.

"We all had a great time and I felt that it was good bonding for the team at the same time."

By the way Baillie starred for Olympic last Sunday night against the Brisbane Strikers at the Belmore Sports Ground.

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AN unemployed high profiled coach was recently asked, what plans does he have for the future and how has he been spending his time lately?

"Well so far this week I've mowed the grass at home three times and have had a Bar B Q.

"Other than that, nothing much at all."

●●●●

DESPITE the WOLLONGONG WOLVES' mammoth defeat of Newcastle United last Friday night at the WIN Stadium, it was not an NSL record.

Although the Wollongong side scored nine goals to defeat the Novacastrians 9-4, the Wolves fell two goals short to break the record.

The NSL record was set back in the very first season, (1977), of the League when Adelaide City dumped the fledgling Mooroolbark by 10-3.

Last Friday evening,

Saso Petrovski (left) shrugs off Melbourne Knights' defender Rod Vargas.

ZORAN MATIC this week has a golden opportunity to snatch no less than six most precious League points by winning just one game.

By John Economos

Matic's side Adelaide City, listed initially to have a bye this week, on Sunday night are at home to play the Wollongong Wolves.

This match is a deferred match from Round 15, when Wollongong was in Port Morseby playing in the Oceania qualifiers for the World Club Championships in Spain next July.

Should Adelaide City manage to beat the Wolves, together with the three 'bonus' points they collect from their bye due to the Carlton debacle, the 'Black and Whites' could bag six League points all in one hit.

That could easily catapult Adelaide City into the 'Top Six'.

And that surely would really set the cat amongst the pigeons.

Zoran Matic: Adelaide City's master coach.

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Answer to F.A.Cup Final question.

Ossie Ardiles was the first none Aussie born player to play in an F.A. Cup Final at Wembley Stadium.

Ardilles was the Argentinian genius midfielder that played for Tottenham Hotspur's victorious Cup Final side.

Ossie Ardiles: Tottenham's brilliant attacking midfielder.

LEICHHARDT TIGERS SOCCER CLUB

Talented young players are now invited to play for the above Club's Under 15s Super Youth League team

TRAINING SESSIONS:
WEDNESDAY AND FRIDAY

Times: 6pm Sharp
Venue: Leichhardt Oval No. 2

For further enquiries all interested players should contact

Aldo: 0410 523 840

Goran Talevski: 'One for the Future'

By Mark Stavroulakis

The National League is only a month away from its completion, and already youngsters have made their names for the forthcoming National League season.

One player in particular is Sydney United's 18-year-old striker cum midfielder Goran Talevski.

Young Goran started his career off at Canberra Deakin where he spent four years at the club that nurtured him as a youngster. Through out his career at Canberra, Talevski was also involved in various academies and State team duties that helped him develop a name as a player for the future.

"As a 15 year-old in the off-season, I played for the ACT Academy of Sport where I spent a year there. It was a good place to start my knowledge on professionalism and got my first taste of the National Youth League. Also during my younger years down at Canberra, I took part in two Nationals, one in Brisbane and one in Parklea as a 15 and 16 year-old.

Playing for the ACT was a huge honor and winning the National Titles in the U15's at Brisbane was a huge achievement for myself and the state as it was some twenty years since an ACT side had won a National Title," said the ACT star.

Through his involvement with the ACT

Youth Profile

State squads, AIS saw young Goran's potential and signed him on a two-year scholarship.

"It was in '99 where I first saw the way in which a professional team was run. It was the best experience ever, spending two years with the likes of Ergic, Ferrante, Milicevic was a huge buzz for myself.

The place itself is one of the best developing systems in the world, and success speaks for itself as it has produced many quality players. The facilities are of high standards there, and coach at the time Steve O'Connor was really good, as he taught me how not only to be a professional on the field but off it as well," said the young AIS graduate.

Soon after his two-year experience with the AIS at the age of 17, young Goran was given the huge honor of having a chance in representing Australia in the U17 World Cup in New Zealand.

"Being in the final 25 man squad for Australia was probably the best feeling in the world. Unfortunately just before the World Cup qualifiers in Fiji, I had a hernia operation, and that sidelined me for four months, missing out the whole Australian experience.

It was great watching the boys come runners

Goran Talevski

up in New Zealand as it was a good squad, I just wished I was there to witness it all first hand, but I guess you get bad luck soccer, and that was mine," said the unlucky star.

Talevski over came his set back and ventured to Sydney where last season, Sydney United signed the youngster on a two-year deal, something of which was a dream for the Canberra born lad.

"Sydney United were interested in me and as a young boy I had dreamed that one day I wanted to play for United. I supported them for many years and playing at the club was a huge honor for myself. In my first season I played fifteen times, mostly coming on as a substitute, however it did gear me up for the following season.

While Alan Hunter was at the club, I played the role of right wingback, a position I wasn't used to at all. However, after the departure of Hunter, Velimir came in and started me in my original position and that was as a striker," said the number 18.

This season alone, Goran has played seventeen times, but has yet to score that elusive first goal in the National League, however through his recent performances has earned him valuable time on the field. "Hopefully with the more games I play the goal will come," said the confident youngster.

Something of a dream, playing for United with names like Arambasic and Awaratiffe was a big thing for young Goran. Being apart of a squad that boasts some of the youngest talent to offer Australia also is a big aspect about the united squad.

"The team itself is great as the boys are good on and off the field. The club has some of the best talent around and mixed in with the older more experienced guys, it provides a good combination," said the former Erindale College student.

The pendulum has changed in past weeks as Alan Hunters departure has seen club hero Velimir Kupresak take over. "Velimir is a good coach who always has a never say die attitude. It's going to take the boys a couple of weeks to adjust to his style, but at the moment the team is doing great. We just need to get a couple of wins down our backs and hopefully turn some heads come end of the season," said Goran.

Goran has had many help throughout his career by many coaches and players, but it's been the guidance of his father (Kosta) and his mother (Suzy) that have helped the youngster immensely.

The National League Is expected to drop some of the clubs that are in this season competition, many people fear it may be united, but Goran is quick to disagree with that rumor.

"The tradition this club holds is second to none and hopefully with Croatian International Alosja Asanovic coming as a guest player in the final two games this season, more supporters will come through the gates of Edensor Park," said the young Sydney United ace.

WOLLONGONG NEWS

By Otto Bader

Wolves Junior Teams Season Launch 2001 — at a special launch last Wednesday 14/3 attended by Wolves boss Joe Cachia, M.C. Dennis Trevor, held indoors Brandon Park, the youngest club members were fitted out with their players 'Kit'.

Six teams, total of 93 youngsters plus coaches and managers, received a club carrier bag with tracksuit, dress shirt, home and away socks, water bottle and a special "Wolves Representative" certificate. Juniors representing the club are in the Cadet League U/11s and U/12s and in the Super Youth League U/13s, U/14s, U/15s and U/17s. They played against all Sydney based NSL clubs plus Newcastle and State League Clubs. Principal Sponsor of the juniors is Land Developer the Stockland Trust.

Wolves Youth Grade Players with Coach Eddie Teroso were handing out the "Kit" to the boys.

Chairman Joe Cachia welcomed the young players, parents and friends, expressing the expectations of the progress to be made for future success of the Wolves.

The Wolves are on the grading of the 'Best Clubs' in the world on rank 190 and rate as one of the outstanding clubs in Australia. He thanked everybody for their commitment to soccer and to the Wollongong club.

Noticed at Wolves Cubs Launch — good to see club directors Hans Van De Haar (handing out the Certificates) and Wally Boscosuro (Players Contracts) present — probably looking for future stars. First Grade had a rest day thus the youth grade players attended.

Youth Grade coach Eddie Teroso is staying with the Wolves for another two seasons, having signed a three year contract.

Together with the "Board" the youth coach is engaged in future plans of a youth development program. Intentions are to offer promising players a career in soccer and proper professional education for life after soccer.

Promotion — the Wolves players attended Engadine Community Festival at the weekend, talking to fans, handing out club mementoes and in general promoting the Wolves.

Third Defeat — this season — not bad some might say, but two losses against Canberra Cosmos, home and away, is tough to swallow. No wonder coach Ron Corry was disappointed, even though not looking for excuses, some players just did not perform to normal expectations.

He warned his charges of the danger of complacency ahead of the match but found no response from the team — they just weren't good enough to succeed. The Wolves let themselves down as well as the many supporters who travelled to Canberra. There is no excuse for a poor showing if they wish to be known as a top side.

Defender David Huxley and midfield player Dino Mennillo are available for selection, coming back from injury and could very well take their spots in the starting eleven with the coach looking at changes in order to regain momentum — the will to win games.

Only top effort is demanded to keep a spot for the play-offs at the competition of the season. Some players could feel the axe coming down for some lacklustre display.

Contracts — some Wolves players are coming off contract at the end of this season. Director of Operations Wally Boscoscuro, responsible for players contracts, will be eager to complete re-signing of top performers required by the coach.

Hopefully the club is able to keep the nucleus of stars together while some fringe players could be released. The next few weeks should result in clearing the air and new contracts to be signed. Coach Ron Corry is an experienced international, knowing very well the value of certain key players and would not waste time or money on non-performers. Club boss Joe Cachia seems confident the players wanted by coach for next season would re-sign with perhaps one of the other being added to squad.

Anthony Surjan: Ex Wollongong Wolves player returned with Newcastle United over the weekend.

Situation — Was the Wolves coach rattled after being humiliated in Canberra? You would think he was angry, probably right, but the word from the training camp, is no panic, business as normal, even easy at times to regain a renewed approach by players. Let's hope the coach is correct and the team regenerates the spark.

Visitors — former Wolves players Anthony Surjan and Esala Masi — both popular with the fans during their stay at Brandon Park in previous seasons — returned to Wollongong when Newcastle played the Wolves at WIN Stadium. Perhaps they may regret a little bit moving to greener pastures.

Corrimal League Club Knockout — semi-finals produced drama and plenty of goals for the hardy spectators braving the rain.

At Elizabeth Park, Bellambi, Corrimal League Club was represented by their President and a Board Member, never missing the pre-season event, running now in it's 39th year.

The first game saw Port Kembla cruising against Lysaghts. Striker Zvonko Usalbreka scored four goals and his support striker Nick Polimenakos scored from the penalty spot. Overall Port looked composed and in control, coach Adrian Alston certainly has assembled a strong squad. The final 5-0 score was flattering for the opposition.

The second semi-final between Western Suburbs and First Division Albion Park W.E. astonished even the most optimistic supporters. West was well in control, leading 3-0 with 10 minutes to go — goals from Matthew Bailey, own goal, and Blake Montgomery. Nick Trencevski brought Albion Park back form defeat, scoring one goal and setting one up for team mate Ian Morris, the other goal was an own goal by the West defence. In extra time West scored from then penalty spot with Matthew Bailey again, to take out the game 4-3, advancing to the final.

The final will see Port Kembla and Western Suburbs fight it out for the rich prizemoney. For third place Albion Park W.E. play Lysaghts, kick-off 12.30pm and 2.30pm at Elizabeth Park.

Club Information — Bellambi Soccer Club, playing at Elizabeth Park, coach Barney King, is assembling a competitive squad for their attempts to win the First Division. A club spokesman announced the signing of new players Mile Valski (midfield) formerly Coniston Lions, Dusko Skurcovski (striker) from Tarrawanna plus Darren Gardiner (midfield) from Tarrawanna.

From last season's side re-signed are Paul Keating, Mick Dorian, Billy Stojovski and keeper Scott Mears. The club and coach are quietly confident of doing very well this coming season. Major sponsor of the soccer club is the Corrimal League Club.

Illawarra Juniors — Oak Flats junior soccer team the U/14's have won the Chromax Hard Chrome Trophy at the recent Sports Star of the Year Awards of the Shellharbour City Festival of Sports. The awards were presented at a Gala Dinner held at Warilla Bowls and Recreation Club.

The Oak Flats U/14's won their competition in Illawarra as minor premier, were runners-up in the Grand final, were 2000 Gala Day winners, won the walker Memorial knock-out and the most cherished NSW State Champion of Champions with coach mark Vinton, a very proud achievement. Congratulations to players and coach.

The prestigious Shellharbour City Sports Star of the Year and Shellharbour Workers club Trophy was presented to Australian Women Hockey Representative Karen Seaman. She was part of the local premiership winning hockey team, has represented NSW and Australia and has been selected in the Australian team to tour Europe later this year.

Young cyclist Jaclyn Kedja won the Junior Award and Tom Strong Memorial Trophy. The senior team award and Lake Times Trophy was won by the Oak Flats Albion park Gymnastic and Acrobatics Club Level 4 Women Trio No.1.

Over 22 sports were entered in the Sports Star of the Year Awards, seniors and juniors, individuals and teams. Several local dignitaries attended the night which was organised by Shellharbour City Council Sports Fund Management Committee.

Port Kembla Soccer Club is the No. 1 club south of Wollongong. The leading soccer side in Illawarra; according to the enthusiastic President of Port Emelio Suluci, the club is on the threshold of another successful soccer season.

They are aiming for winning the Corrimal League Club K.O., the annual Bampton Cup, the minor premiership and the Grand Final.

Port have an attractive home ground in Wetherall Park, equipped with floodlights, and are coached by Adrian Alston now in his 9th season at the club, himself a former international. Major sponsor for ten years now is the mighty Fraternity Club. Assistant coach is Eddy DeGrabriel and Youth Coach is Angelo Cignarella, both for years club members.

Newcomers this year are striker Zvonko Ulsjbeka, Paul Dimech, Brett Kimmount and Jason Baron. Also Nick Polimenakos is now a Port player, formerly with a State League Club. Gone are Kane Maccabei to Balgownie, Andrew Ravanello to Canberra Cosmos and bench player John Carusi to Balgownie.

Port's season launch is set down for Saturday 24/3. at the Fraternity Club with around 400 plus expected, tickets can be ordered from Emelio Suluci, M/P 0419261664.

A strong committee heads the administration. Nearly all players are individually-sponsored by business supporters. One has to admire the obvious progress of this ambitious soccer club.

Matildas' Fortunas (1)

SOCCER WOMAN BY JANENE MAR

Matildas captain Alison Forman and Olympic teammate Sharon Black set off for top Danish club Fortuna Hjorring soon after Sydney 2000.

In this chat with both players,we check on "Ali" and "Blacky's" progress as their side prepares to take on the second half of the season following the winter break.

Forman is a veteran of Fortuna, having played there for seven previous seasons since she first joined Julie Murray at the club in January 1992.

The Aussie won individual honours as well, awarded as Player of the Year 1996/97, and became the club's first 'foreign' player to notch up 100 matches.

Forman then put her club career on hold in early 1999 to join the Matildas in fulltime training at the Australian Institute of Sport leading up to the World Cup and Olympic Games.

ALISON FORMAN

Can you fill us in with some background information on the club and the Danish league?

Fortuna Hj¯rring was founded in 1966 and will celebrate its 35th birthday on the 14th of October this year. Fortuna Hjorring is one of the few clubs that consists of only women's teams, no men's teams. The club has 30 female teams starting from 4 to 5 years old up to old girls. Fortuna Hjorring was the first female club in Denmark to introduce contracts with their players.

Ours was the first club from Denmark to win the Nordic Cup Championship for leading clubs throughout Europe. Fortuna Hjorring has been a producer of top level players for years, not only to their own elite team but for the Danish National Team.

The Danish elite division for women consists of eight teams, with the bottom two teams being demoted each year and the top two from the 1st division being promoted to the elite division.

We are currently preparing to start the second half of our season on the 25th of March. The title is up for grabs at the start of June. We then hold a short three week break and start a new season that runs through until the 25th of November and then resumes again next March after the winter break.

The standard of the league is very high and it's like playing a national team game each weekend. It's a competitive league physically and tactically.

Had things changed at all when you got back to Denmark after almost two years away?

Things hadn't really changed that much. Hjorring is a pretty small town and everybody knows everybody and life is slow moving at times. There were some new faces in the team — some talents from smaller clubs around the area, our national team keeper returned after having a baby, and a new trainer is in charge of the team. All positive things as far as the team goes!

When does the season restart, and what are the team's prospects?

Alison Forman

The season is due to start on the 25th of March and by the look of the weather lately, it will happen. Sometimes the first game of the season can be cancelled due to snow but it's looking good.

We are currently positioned third on the ladder and have some ground to make up to reach the top team "OB", but after our team meeting last weekend where we discussed team goals for the season we have realistically set our goals on a silver medal for this season. Anything better than this will be a great achievement but we will not accept anything less.

Are there many other 'foreign' players at the club or in the league?

At this moment in time, Fortuna's foreigners consist of only Blacky and myself. Last season we had an Irish international Margaret Saurin playing for the club. Fortuna has previously had players from USA, Finland, Iceland, Australia, Norway and Germany. Other clubs in the league also have players from New Zealand (Donna Baker), Iceland, Norway and USA.

Are you happy with your form at present?

I am very pleased with my current form as we have just been through the pre-season period of training, which involves lots of running and gym work due to the weather conditions here in Denmark. We have the opportunity of training in a full field indoor hall which helps out in the winter months when the fields are frozen.

I have personally played all training games to date with one loss out of seven games and I have scored three goals to date. I have been promoted to centre midfield from left back and I'm loving it. This weekend is our last training game before the start of the season and we are travelling to Landvetter in Sweden to play against Landvetter, who play in the top league in Sweden.

What is your home ground like, and what sort of crowds do you get?

Our home ground here in Hjorring used to be the home for the Danish Women's National Team but they have recently been moved to Odense. So therefore the standard of the ground is perfect having to have been internationally accredited. It is very big and suits the style of play we play on our team. To our normal competition games we can get anywhere between 500 up to a couple of thousand spectators.

You have long worked as International Secretary for the Dana Cup. What can you tell us about that?

The Dana Cup, Hjorring is the largest international youth tournament in the world, held in the last week in July every year. We have over 800 teams from over 45 different countries competing in our tournament each year. The town of Hjorring is inhabitated by 25,000 people, and during the Dana Cup week the town is doubled with the an extra 25,000 participants from all around the world, it is the stage for a football festival.

The Dana Cup, Hjorring has had the pleasure of being opened by such stars as Flemming Poulsen, Brian Laudrup, and Peter Schmicheal. Brian Laudrup actually played in the Dana Cup as a young player. We have had two teams entered previously in our tournament from Australia.

I really enjoy my work for the Dana Cup and it involves lots of travel for promotion work in the USA and throughout Europe and always something different from day to day. It is the kind of job that brings satifaction when you talk with people throughout the year and finally get to meet them during the Dana Cup week.

Next Week SHARON BLACK

WOLVES HUNGRY FOR SOUTHS

By Arvind Hickman

The Wollongong Wolves will host South Melbourne in an epic battle of the top two teams at WIN Stadium this Friday night.

The game features the best attacking team in the country (Wollongong) against the tightest defence (South Melbourne), with the victor opening up an important three point buffer, a break that could prove crucial at this late stage in the season.

The hungry Wolves made their NSL intentions clear last week with a devastating 9-4 demolition of Newcastle United, while Souths will be looking for some solidarity after a couple of shaky performances in the past week, losing to Brisbane and scrapping home against Canberra.

George Souris

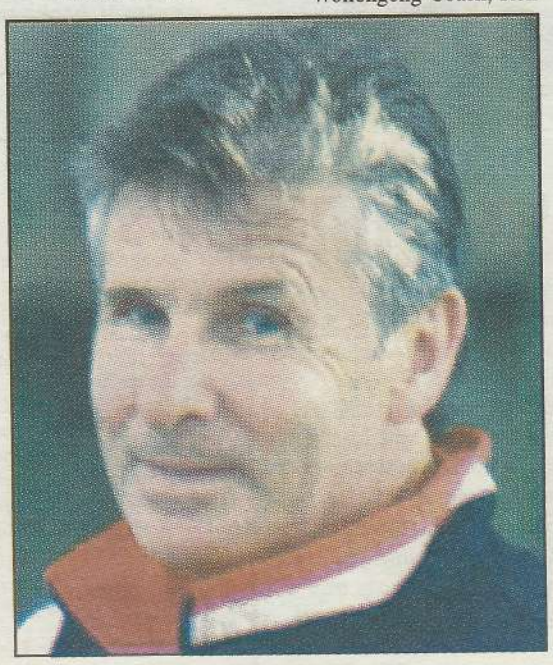
Wollongong Coach, Ron Corry, believes this game could greatly help the Wolves claim for a minor premiership.

Paul Reid

"If we win it would give us a three point advantage on Souths, and a win on Sunday (against Adelaide) would give us a break on the rest of the pack," he stated to ABSW.

"South Melbourne are a very good team and it will be an excellent game, you would be crazy to miss this one. Mickey Petterson is doing a great job with the team and they are strong all over the park. They have a strong attack and the best defensive record in the league."

"It's always a testing time when we play against the top three teams, Perth, Olympic and Souths, and it's the sort of game where the bounce of the ball or a referee's decision could decide the outcome."



Ronnie Corry: Wollongong coach.

The Wolves will boast a full strength side with no injuries or suspensions, while South Melbourne will only be missing Zelkjo Susa who is expected to return within the next few weeks, from injury.

Souths' Coach, Mickey Petersen, is looking forward to the challenge and believes a moment of brilliance coulld well decide the match.

"Wollongong are a pretty good team and it is the sortof game you look forward to, as we believe it is a good test for us," he said.

"They're a very attack-minded team and they're goals for record this season speaks for itself. If we execute our game plan correctly it will hopefully bring us success."

"We think we've had a fairly good season, having lost three times, and are fairly confident. However in these sort of games it might only take one moment of magic from an individual to decide the game," ended Petersen.

Mehmet Durakovic

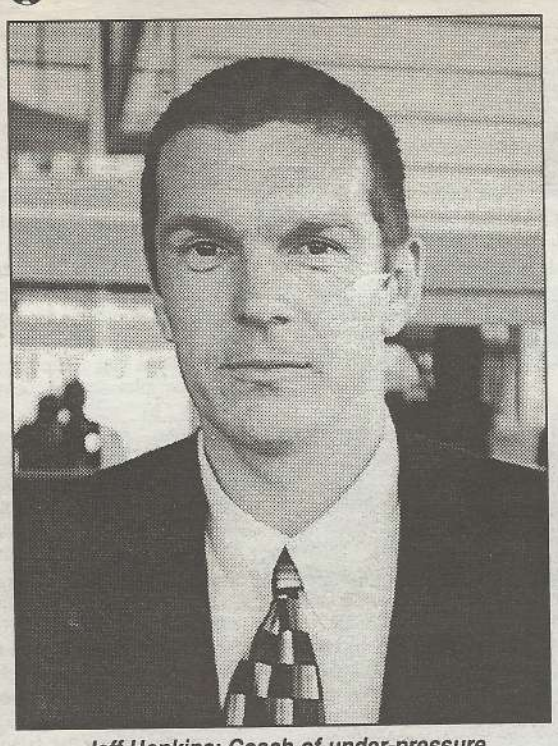
Both teams boast a wealth of 'game-breakers' so this should be a highly entertaining affair.

Perhaps the most enduring battle on the park will be whether South Melbourne's near impenetrable defence, led by seasoned veteran Mehmet Durakovic, can prevent the Wolves' goal scoring juggernaut which boasts a tally of 60 goals.

The likes of Scott Chipperfield, Saso Petrovski and Stuart Young have all had outstanding seasons and scored an amazing 38 goals between them, making the Wolves trio arguably the most potent strike trio in the league.

Mickey Petersen: South Melbourne coach.

Letters to the Editor



Jeff Hopkins: Coach of under-pressure Eastern Pride.

Eastern Pride sanctions are unjustified

Dear Sir,

Well what do you know? Tony Labbozzetta has just been in charge and already we hear that Eastern Pride will be stripped of all its points, plus it won't be able to earn anymore if it continues in the competition until the end of the season, unless $50,000 it's owing is fully paid for.

As they know that they will be one of the teams axed at the end of the season, why would they want to pay the $50,000 at this late stage of the season.

All that Soccer Australia is doing is putting the Pride in a position of pulling out of the competition here and now with seven or eight rounds still to go.

Is that what Mr Labbozzetta and his colleagues want? If it is, then its an absolute disgrace, and turns the NSL into an absolute joke if the Eastern Pride drop out with a quarter of the season still to run.

This $50,000 payment should never have been brought up at this stage with punitive penalties, if there was never any chance of getting it paid now that the Pride know they will be cut off at the end of the season.

It confirms my belief that Soccer Australia cares more about money than the credibility of our local competition.

If it has no respect for the local game, then its time for a new Breakaway League, that will concentrate solely on the NSL only for a few years and leave the international side of the game to the establishment, to look after.

With a FIFA ban in place, the local game can then concentrate on producing local heroes for the mainstream public and kids to look up to, without the distraction of European contracts buzzing around in all young players heads.

This would be the biggest advantage of a FIFA ban, even though there would be many disadvantages as well. But at least its something to think about.

Dominic Scullino,
Nerang. Qld.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear Readers,

To all our most valued readers, please take serious note of the following:
a) As from our very next issue, ABSW has been forced to remind you all, that your letters in future must be very concise, sharp and to the point. (This in future will be very strictly enforced).

b) Over the past four months or so, we have been receiving far too many letters that, (most regrettably), have been ridiculously lengthy which has forced us to scrap them.

c) It goes without saying, ABSW will NOT publish any material sent in that is blatantly defamatory, irrespective whether the reader's opinion has merit or not.

d) Please keep your letters as intelligent free of malice and clear as possible, correctly researching your facts before putting pen to paper.

e) "Letters To The Editor" received AFTER any Friday, will NOT be published in the following week's edition of ABSW.
Therefore send your letters in early ... Please.

f) Full name, address and contact number MUST also be included on all letters submitted.

Yours in Sport,
ABSW - Editor.

Blueprint for change in Oz Soccer

Dear Sir,

If ever there was a sports code that has gone backwards in the last 20 years it is the National Soccer League of Australia.

Those of us who have followed the game faithfully know its familiar litany of woes, which can be briefly summarised as,

(a) the fact that, excluding finals, a crowd over 20,000 is yet to attend an ordinary NSL match,

(b) Clubs going broke mid season (West Adelaide, Carlton),

(c) The game being treated with contempt by the television media (and quite rightly so when the sport is watched by a minuscule of spectators),

(d) The failure of the ethnic based clubs (Adelaide City Force, South Melbourne, Melbourne Knights, Sydney United, Sydney Olympic and Marconi), traditionally supported by people of Greek, Italian and Croatian backgrounds, to overcome their mono ethnicity which has meant that they are attracting less spectators today than they did when the league started in 1977-78,

(e) Some clubs trying to compete in the league with far too small a population base and with limited corporate sponsorship (Eastern Pride and the Canberra Cosmos).

It would be nice if we could believe that the so called 12 club restructure to come later this year will overcome these limitations and lead to the sport breaking through to the mainstream in the way that the AFL and the ARL have done so successfully.

Unfortunately, after 23 years of sustained incompetence and timidity by our soccer administrators I doubt this will happen. The proposed change merely represents a cull of the clubs and not the complete restructure that is so desperately overdue.

Without a substantial change in the basic composition of clubs, all that will happen is a change from one relatively well attended successful club (Perth Glory) and 15 other poorly attended struggling clubs to one successful club (Perth Glory) and 11 other poorly attended struggle clubs.

After much deep thought and pondering 'outside the square' I am convinced the following reforms would both Australianise the game successfully here and make our clubs internationally famous. These recommendations are founded on the principle that the long term success of the NSL competition is greater than the individual and club power games and political short interest.

Hence changes, no matter how painful or strident the resistance by supporters of the status quo, must be followed through.

NAME CHANGE

Change the name of the National Soccer League to either the Australian Soccer League (ASL) or the Australian Premier League (APL). If its good enough for the Australian Football League (AFL). The Australian Rugby League (ARL) and the Australian Baseball League (ABL) then its good enough for soccer.

RETENTION OF CURRENT TEAMS BASED ON REGIONS

I favour the retention of current teams from Newcastle, Wollongong, Auckland, Brisbane, Perth and Adelaide (but with a new consortium there) as this continues to give an excellent spread of teams throughout Australasia.

AN ASIAN CUP INCLUDING AUSTRALIAN TEAMS

As recently stated by David Mitchell our domestic Soccer urgently needs Asian Cup for us to participate in. Together with the World Club Championship that Wollongong have recently won, this extra overseas competition would offer our sponsors international exposure for their products in a market of millions of Soccer fanatics in Asia as well as giving our local players invaluable experience in playing in different climates and conditions in front of hostile crowds.

This would assist in toughening our players up for the World Cup.

The prize money could be terrific too. Some countries that come to mind are Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Korea, Japan, China, the Philippines and others.

A NEW TEAM FOR ADELAIDE AND SOUTH AUSTRALIA

The issuing of a licence to a new multicultural club and consortium in Adelaide to replace Adelaide City Force which has not progressed in 20 years. The new club must, above all, have a new uniform to overcome the traditional Italian background of the old City club which is preventing it from representing the wider community in the way the Adelaide Crows are "the pride of South Australia."

DIVISION OF SYDNEY IN TO FOUR REGIONS

Sydney is a Soccer disaster with too many teams and too many ethnic clubs with aging and declining support (although their identification of raw talent and support of youth is excellent, but talent spotting is not the issue here) so Sydney United, Sydney Olympic and Marconi must be dropped from the league as soon as possible.

Like Adelaide City, they have gone nowhere over 20 years. If anything their crowds are even smaller. Now. A far better option would be a 4 team entry based on regions in Sydney. This would work out quite nicely. One team covering the North Shore (Northern Spirit), one team covering the geographical centre of Sydney (Parramatta Power), one team in the growth site and heavily populated outskirts of Sydney around Macarthur/Campbelltown, say the Macarthur Rams (what a great historical Aussie name) and a fourth team representing the entire south of Sydney such as Cronulla/Sutherland.

DROPPING OF CANBERRA COSMOS AND EASTERN PRIDE

It is time the Canberra Cosmos and the Eastern Pride faced the inevitable, stopped trying to overachieve and drop back to their respective state leagues in New South Wales and Victoria respectively.

This not a criticism of the clubs or their administrators and diehard supporters but more a recognition of limited populations creating unsustainable finances.

CREATION OF A NATIONAL RESERVES COMPETITION

Time after time the successful championship winning clubs have a depth of players to overcome the inevitable injuries, suspensions and walk outs. Currently some clubs have teams in the Northern and Southern Youth Leagues to foster young talent which is admirable but I think this is not strong enough and would like the NSL clubs to have formal reserves sides that play each other like the firsts.

The benefits are huge as this would create a path for clubs to develop a youth policy, create competition for spots in the first team, permit coaches to drop out of form or carrying an injury players and allow clubs to sign more overseas players and provide them with a huge quality forum to play in.

Mike Joske,
Perth. WA.

Line-up of Australia's national side, the Socceroos, expected to kick-off their 2002 World Cup campaign, next month will include players from the NSL.

BREAKAWAY LEAGUE CAN'T WORK

Dear Sir,

In reaction to, 'A peep into the Breakaway League' of D. Scullino, I do not know that if you are a Nerang resident, or a resident writer of ABSW, but your fantastic fantasy, of ABSW 6/03/01, is not realisable, because there is no logic in it!

The weakness is your view e.g. "(2) South Melbourne the only mono Ethnic Club worth preserving with, as they have a solid and strong support for long-term survival."

What about the other Ethnic Clubs? In all capital cities; from the Malteses, Italians, Croatians, Greeks, Yugoslavs, and etc?

All those clubs founded, and supported with people with experiences in businesses, factories, companies, etc, they are very rich people who are Club, board and Club members!

They are the ones, when money is needed, whom give the tax deductable dollars to help out the clubs, or do you think ethnic clubs, including South Melbourne — can survive on, gate and club-bar dollars earnings only?

I moved eight months ago to Queensland, from NSW, and since the early seventies I have seen clubs develop on those lines.

Here in Australia that is the way, in which soccer clubs will function, in any League, until the oval ball supporters won't desert their games, and decide to follow soccer only!!?

But continue to write your ideas, maybe someday, somebody may will realise it!!!

R. Marton,
Tingalpa. Qld.

OFF THE CROSSBAR

By Allan Crisp

NEW ADELAIDE CLUB SET FOR NSL ACTION

When South Australia last had two vibrantly active NSL clubs, they attracted 120,000 spectators to watch 26 games.

Adelaide based businessman Con Makris has ambitions to better that scenario by introducing his own new club as a sparring partner for Adelaide City Force and to generally shake-up the revamped 12-team league next season.

A renowned mover and shaker, Makris has put his money where his mouth is by including a bank cheque of $250,000 and a $10,000 affiliation fee together with his NSL application for his tentatively named South Coast Eagles.

Part of his grand plan is to invite the South Australian public to help choose a more marketable name that will appeal to the widest possible audience.

With confidence as his watchword, Makris has announced that the official team launch would be held at Adelaide's Radisson Playford Hotel in June.

The club would mirror the lead of SA's AFL club the Adelaide Crows and the men's basketball side the Adelaide 36ers by playing in the State's traditional colours of red, blue and gold.

And to further ensure success, the new club would use the marketing blue print set by the crowd pulling giant Perth Glory.

Makris set his dream in motion by buying the West Torrens Birkalla Soccer Club at Camden, the club which spawned Australian internationals, Jack Smith, Ron Bracegirdle, Alby Castle, Leon Hill, Alex Tobin, Sergio Melta and Steve Maxwell.

Since its inception in 1933, Birkalla has been a consistent trophy winner and a regular supplier of State team player talent at all levels of competition.

New owner-chairman Makris began his involvement by refurbishing the Camden Sports Centre clubrooms and boosting the senior playing staff by signing players of NSL experience as well as recruiting promising young talent.

Birkalla hit an immediate jackpot by winning the inaugural SA Summer Series, beating reigning Premier League champions the Blue Eagles 2-0 in the grand final.

Some of that squad are expected to be promoted to the NSL contingent, which already is envisaged to be a 22-man squad that should include several Socceroo players, currently based in Europe.

Former Birkalla coach Zoran Maricic and Queensland-based coach Dragan Vilic guided the blue and golds to that triumph and both could be retained in a coaching panel, consisting of up to three coaches and support staff for the NSL team.

Eddie Thompson, Ken Worden and Alan Davidson are some of the big names touted as possible coaches for the club.

Makris plans to field a team of such impressive allure that Hindmarsh Stadium would be packed to the rafters for all of its home games on Saturday nights — the night pencilled in as the best marketable alternative to attract families.

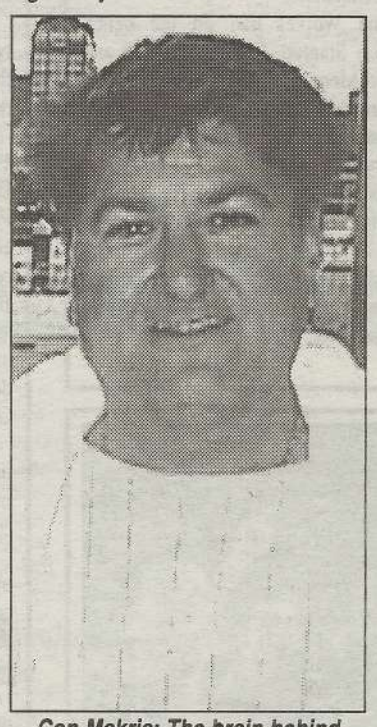
"Saturday night is when most people are in the habit of going out and about and we want to make sure the kids attend our matches," Makris said.

"We want to present a complete entertainment package, not just a soccer match. We will target a broad based audience with each match regarded as an event"

The whirlwind tycoon said he was in the process of appointing a management team. "The new directors will fill the vacant positions in accordance with the club structure and the application submitted to Soccer Australia.

"I will not be involved in the decision making process, as a matter of fact I will be quite divorced from it.

"The new elected board will be responsible for the day to day running of the club, with the board of management having a two-year mandate."



Con Makris: The brain behind upcoming South Coast Eagles.

IMPORTS RETURN

Birkalla's New South Wales "imports" from Marrickville Olympic, Paul Gaffney and Jim Nikas have returned to Sydney after playing significant roles in the SA club's Summer Series success.

The talented pair will play in their hometown during the NSW Premier League season, but midfielder Nikas is certain to come back to Adelaide because he has signed for Birkalla.

Birks are keen to also clinch Gaffney on a permanent contract and will leave no stone unturned in its efforts to convince the lively striker he should become an Adelaideian.

Ex-Port Lion Pirate Greg Hagias was another to pen a success story in his debut stint for Birkalla, having joined the Camden Cavaliers after a turbulent spell in Greece.

And, another possible capture for Birkalla could be Boyan Vilic, 20 year-old son of visiting Queensland coach, Dragan Vilic.

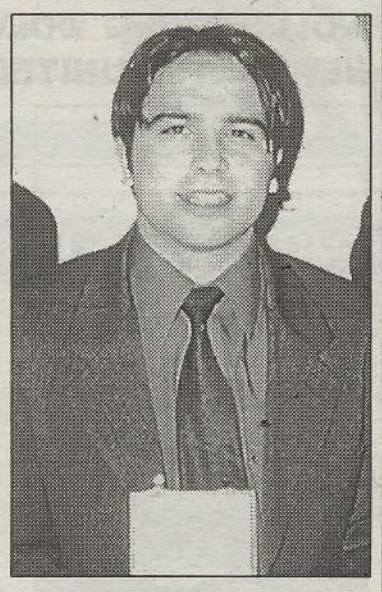
The father-son combination were spotted sitting together in the Hindmarsh Stadium grandstand during Olympians third place play-off win over Raiders.

BLUES GAMBLE FAILS

Winning has become second nature for the Blue Eagles and when super coach Zoran Karadzic fails to bring home the finals bacon, head scratching begins.

There were no warning bells sounded after the Blues lost to Birkalla, but when the Summer Series grand final is examined, it must be conceded that Birks triumphed tactically by cutting out Eagles playmaker Corey Artone and their ace striking pair, Michael Brooks and Frank Sergi.

It also could be argued that Karadzic gambled in fielding Gino DeLucia in goal rather than stick with his deputy custodian Anthony Spinelli.



Jim Nikas: Brief return to Sydney.

DeLucia was benched for the earlier series matches, as he served a five match suspension imposed from last season's Premier League grand final.

Last week's Summer Series final was, consequently DeLucia's first genuine competitive match for the year, while young Spinelli had performed brilliantly in DeLucia's absence.

Allan Crisp can be heard on the Marshall Thompson Homes Pacific Real Estate 5RPH (1197AM) Breakfast Soccer Show each Tuesday from 7.30am-9am, along with Croydon Kings coach Phil Scardigno, Channel 10 Sports Reporter Robbie Popplestone, Peter Millar, The Advertiser Soccer writer Meno Toutsidis and former Australian international John Perin.

Brisbane Strikers' Peter Grierson (left) tussles with South melbourne midfielder, Con Boutsianis during the rescheduled midweek clash.

National Soccer League Extra

BRISBANE STRIKERS	3
SOUTH MELBOURNE	2

For only the second time this season and the second time in a fortnight, South Melbourne went down to Brisbane Strikers 3-2 at Ballymore on Wednesday night.

The home side signalled their intent just three minutes into the game, when

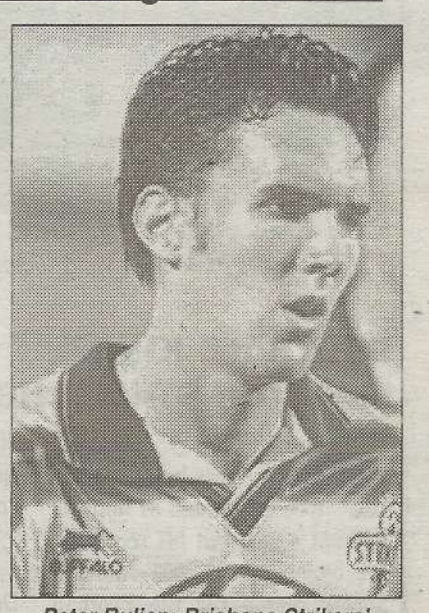
Strikers' Fernando Rech, made a burst up the middle — laid the ball off to the right wing, before planting himself in front of goal to receive the cross and slot it past South's Socceroo 'keeper Michael Petkovic, giving himself a belated birthday present. Rech turned 27 just a day before.

The joy of the home fans was however short-lived when the league leaders, undaunted, equalised just six minutes later through a Goran Lozanovski goal and then took the lead in the 13th minute after Southís tireless captain Paul Trimboli made it 2-1 for the visitors.

The first 20 minutes of the second half produced some good football but no goals as each side missed chance-after-chance

It was however on the 60-minute mark that the Strikers appeared to turn up the heat when coach John Kosmina made two substitutions. Chay Hews for David Pilic in the midfield and striker Paul Foster was replaced by Peter Buljan up front.

The substitutions proved to be the game's turning point.



Peter Buljan: Brisbane Strikers' matchwinning substitute.

Soon after, Jeromy Harris found the back of the net to equalise in the 67th minute, bringing his season's tally to seven goals.

Both teams seemed destined for a point apiece until substitute Buljan put paid to such expectations when with seven minutes remaining, he struck to give the Strikers the lead, which proved to be the matchwinner.

The Ballymore crowd of just 1441 spectators were beside themselves as the home team hung onto keep all the points in Brisbane, sending South Melbourne back home empty handed for the second time in a fortnight.

NATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE

WOLLONGONG WOLVES 9
NEWCASTLE UNITED 4

By Otto Bader

Saso Petrovski: He notched another hat-trick against Newcastle.

A record score, a convincing win and the coach is unhappy.

Wolves coach Ron Corry did not mince words afterwards, expressing his annoyance with his team in the second half, allowing four "gift goals" as he put it, saying his players were "show-boating", showing off individually, being slack in defence, not at all properly focussed on the job.

Newcastle coach Lee Sterry admitted his side was steam-rolled in the first half while the second half resulted in a 4-4 all draw, saying four regulars were out and the club has not the depth needed to make up for injuries and suspensions. He is down to 15 players available at present.

Even the fans were annoyed with the Wolves after the final whistle for a "farcical" display, nobody did want to see Newcastle demolished like that.

The crowd of 4,777 witnessed a glut of goals in the first half, the Wolves going up 5-0 with scores from Sasho Petrovski (3), Stuart Young (2), Scott Chipperfield (2), Paul Reid (1) and Ben Blake (1) in total.

They could have even scored more goals, the Newcastle 'keeper Bob Catlin made several top saves from Middleby, Young and Petrovski while more than three open goal-opportunities were carelessly given away instead of putting the ball into net with a little bit more concentration.

Newcastle scored two goals with former Wollongong player Esala Masi, with the Wolves defenders generously presenting the opportunity to the striker, which made the coach's blood boil, then again gifts presented to Newcastle's Peter Juchniewicz and Chad Mansley who thankfully accepted the chances.

The Wolves had on the bench Robert Stanton, David Cervinski and Dino Mennillo plus 'keeper Daniel Beltrame. Goalkeeper Dean Anastasiadis was rested with a knee injury.

As brilliant as the Wolves played in the first half, the coach still could make one or two changes for the coming matches since he was very critical of the lack of composure in the later half of the game.

Players of Football Kingz acknowledge cheers from the crowd at the end of their win over Marconi Stallions.

FOOTBALL KINGZ 1
MARCONI STALLIONS 0

Football Kingz' captain, Harry Ngata had gone sixteen games and 87 minutes without a goal but his second of the ongoing 2000-2001 National Soccer season for the Football Kingz on Friday night, was well worth the wait.

Ngata not only broke his goals' drought, he also secured three valuable points for the Kingz at Westpac Trust Stadium with his last-gasp goal in the 1-0 upset win over Sydney's Marconi Stallions.

Gerard Davis took advantage of some poor defending by Marconi to feed Wynton Rufer, whose stinging left foot shot was only parried by Stallions goalkeeper David Aceski and left Ngata the simple task of knocking the ball into an empty net.

Ngata had come into the game as a substitute 12 minutes earlier for Dennis Ibrahim. It was his first goal since scoring from the penalty spot in the Kingz's 4-2 loss to Northern Spirit before Christmas.

"It has been a long time between drinks but it was great to end the drought like that," said Ngata, who was born in Wanganui and raised in Wellington.

"Getting a goal is always nice but to get it at such a crucial time, and here in Wellington, was terrific." A sixth win of the season means the Kingz can still mathematically make the top-six play-offs although they will need a golden run over the closing seven rounds. It looked like the 13,000 strong crowd would go home frustrated at the Kingz's inability to break down Marconi's physical defence.

Ngata's goal not only gave them something to cheer about but gave the Kingz their first win in three matches at the stadium.

The match had been a somewhat drab affair until then, with little goal mouth action. Probably the only one mildly excited about that was the Kingz's Argentine goalkeeper Julio Cuello, who kept a clean sheet in just his third league appearance for the club.

ADELAIDE CITY 4
PERTH GLORY 6

By Allan Crisp

This record breaking ten-goal extravaganza thrilled and excited the fans, but left rival coaches Bernd Stange and Zoran Matic with mixed emotions.

The 6-4 scoreline preserved Perth's unbeaten run at Hindmarsh Stadium and represented the first time that Adelaide Force had conceded six goals in a home fixture.

Glory twice led by two goals, but City bravely fought back to level each time before the determined visitor finished a brace ahead at the final whistle.

There was a Perth penalty, an own goal by City and a disputed goal jammed into this action packed match that did not produce a single booking.

Alistair Edwards shoved Glory into a 17th minute lead, courtesy of a clever Damian Mori cut back and it was 2-0 to Perth nine minutes later when City defender Ante Kovacevic sliced the ball into his own net as he tried to intercept a cross from Bobby Despotovski.

Brad Hassell hit back for City three minutes later when his shot deflected off a Perth defender to loop over Jason Petkovic in the Glory goal.

Scott Tunbridge completed the first levelling procedure tbree minutes on when he met a cross from Hassell from the left by cushioning a superb header past Petkovic.

The rapid fire scoring continued six minutes later when Despotovski was collared around his neck by Fabrizio Bucciarelli and the Perth striker smashed home his seventh penalty of his fruitful season.

Fortune changed for Despotovski a minute before half time when he suffered a damaged ankle from a rugged tackle, an injury that could sideline him for at least two weeks.

Scott Miller regained Perth's two-goal advantage seven minutes after the restart by drilling a great drive into the roof of the City net.

City defender Gianluca Lagati began another Force revival when he latched onto a rebound after a header by Claudio Pelosi struck an opponent.

This attempt at a third Force comeback looked short lived when Mori blasted in the goal of the game in the 72nd minute to rub salt into his former club's wounds.

There was more drama as Tunbridge was denied a headed goal that appeared to cross the goalline.

Glory stretched its lead to three goals at the 78th minute mark when substitute John Carbone flashed a rebound off an Edwards shot past Adrian Cagalj.

But young Tunbridge loomed large with his second adroit header of the amazing contest to record his 10th goal of his debut season and restore respectability to the scoreline.

Mori's return to his Hindmarsh hunting ground was both memorable and gratifying."Both teams played attacking football that was entertaining for the crowd," Mori said.

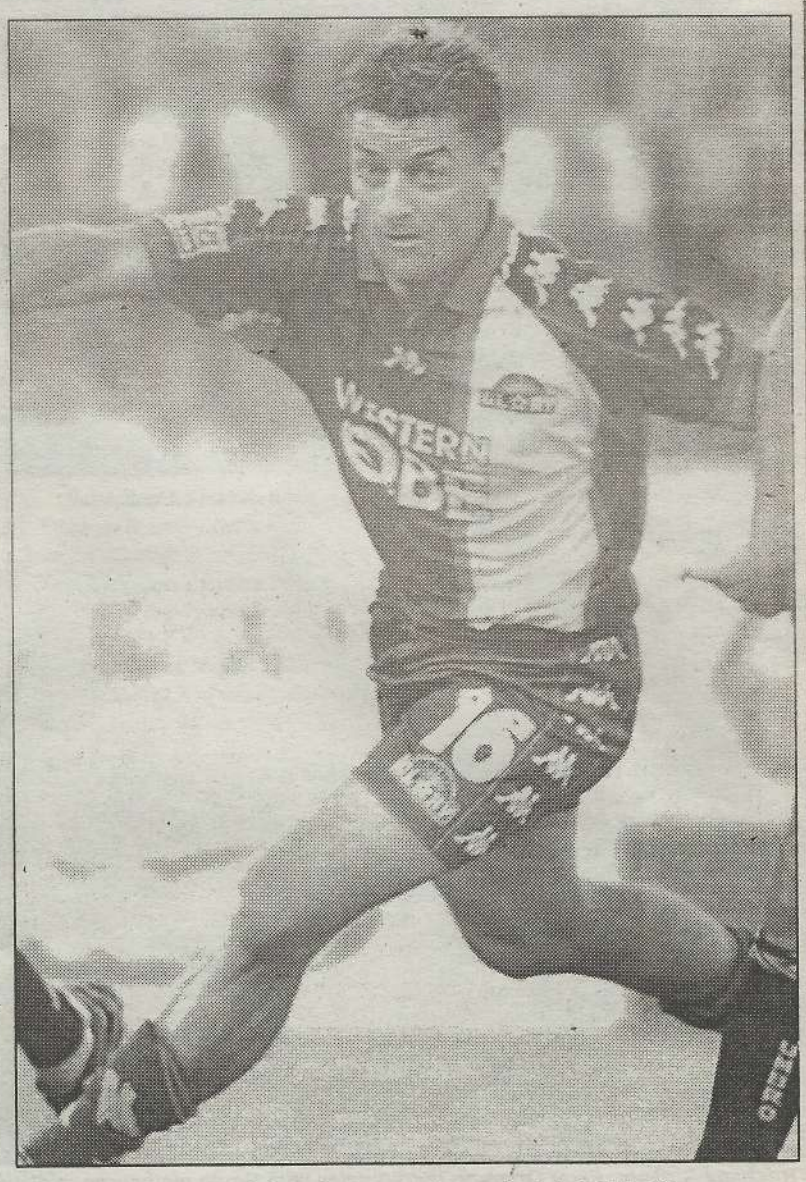
"It was difficult playing against my old side and I was pleased to have scored, but the main thing is that we won, because we needed the points."

The win increased Perth's winning sequence to 12 games and signalled the 60th goal of the campaign, but coach Stange said he was not content with the performance.

"My players were too lazy and arrogant, but I was happy with the result," he said.

Matic rated the spot kick decision as the turning point of the match, declaring that his team was, "killed by the penalty.

"For 20 minutes after that we were like drunks, but I'm not complaining about my players and their attitude to the game because they put in a gutsy effort."



Damian Mori: Struck target twice against Adelaide City.

NATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE

EASTERN PRIDE 2
MELBOURNE KNIGHTS 2

By Damian Tripodi

Eastern Pride, which so often lost right on the death knock, this time turned things around by coming from behind and scoring at the 91st minute to salvage a most creditable 2-2 draw against a strong Melbourne Knights outfit.

When it appeared as if the match was doomed to finish as yet another 2-1 loss for Pride, Defender Dean Fak, from just outside the box, on the half volley drove an Ante Deak cross past Knights keeper Lupce Acevski and into the net for the equalizer.

Almost premiership style celebrations prevailed as Referee Brett Hugo blew the final whistle as it has been a long time since the long suffering Pride fans have had the opportunity of celebrating a point on their home ground.

The sad story to this game was the fact that for the first time ever, the dreaded "ugly supporter" made an appearance at Mobil Park. Before the match, as over two Knights fans were evicted from the ground and some arrests were made following a brawl in the Pride members bar. A fracas erupted when a group of Kinghts fans charged into the bar waving flags, making provocative gestures and chanting in the Croatian language. A security officer ended up in hospital after being punched about the face when he approached the intruders to tell them to move away from the area.

Despite the shocking weather conditions and a water logged pitch, the game was an entertaining affair with both sides sharing moments of glory.

From the outset, Pride appeared to be eager to making amends for recent last minute lapses in concentration and go all out for an early goal. They adapted to the conditions far better that their more illustrious opponents and began an attacking game leaving the Knights in their wake. In fact by half time the Knights had only one clear shot at goal to Prideís seven. Midfielder Lubo Lapsanski was the only Knightís player living up to his reputation and making some good moves. The shocking conditions also prevented the Knights from playing their usual passing game, which suited the home side better.

After a series of excellent forward moves and close shaves, at the 22nd minute Easter Pride got on the score board when Ante Deak was brought down in the penalty box. Naum Sekulovski converted from the spot.

Eugene Galekovic: Pride's agile goalkeper.

The Knights only chance in the first half came at the 37nd minute when Daniel Vasilevski's shot was cleared off the line by Paul Wearne.

The second half saw a revived Melbourne Knights now trying to acclimatise to the conditions and menacing the home side's lead.

At the 54th minute A Lasanski free kick was only partially cleared by the Pride defence, falling favourably to Alez Kirazoclou who levelled the scores. Only one minute later, Toto Da Costa put the Knights ahead by beating Paul Wearne and connecting onto an Andy Vargas cross.

Just as the fans were beginning to leave Mobil Park, Fak equalized for the 2-2 draw.

Knights coach Vlado Vanis admitted at the end of the match that his players had been unable to adapt to the conditions.

"We played well in the second half. This is always a difficult ground in which to play. We cannot play a passing game on this ground." Said the coach.

"It's nice to be the team to go away with the late goal", stated Pride coach Jeff Hopkins. "We dominated the first half, but full credit to them they came back and did to us what we did to them earlier. We missed three regular starters in Clayton Bell, Mike Conroy and Robbie Puca, but in the end We are happy with the one point." Stated the coach.

SOUTH MELBOURNE 1
CANBERRA 0

Bert van Bedaf

South Melbourne reclaimed top of the league, but it had to wait until eleven minutes from the end before it was able to force the vital break against a stoically defending Canberra Cosmos.

South missed a handful of chances in the first half and allowed Canberra a couple of chances after the break. But eventually, the match at Bob Jane stadium finished in a deserved 1-0 victory for the home team with a perfectly struck free-kick from Con Boutsianis in the 79th minute.

Canberra coach Milan Milovanovic was particularly disappointed to lose from a set piece."We gave a silly goal away from a set piece. We discussed this before the game. We know Boutsianis can score spectacular goals from free-kicks.

Con Boutsianis (right) of South Melbourne tussles with Con Anthopoulos of Canberra Cosmos.

South coach Mike Petersen was relieved to have punctured the Cosmos defence at the near-death, but again he spoke his mind against the unsporting South Melbourne supporters who baited the team from the sidelines, chanting "Boring, boring". "If we would have scored early, it would have changed the complexion (of the game), but we didn't and we had to rely on a set piece or a lucky break and we did so today," he said.

The league leader failed to jump ahead in the opening minutes. Paul Trimboli knocked the ball over the bar from a Vaughan Coveny cutback and Con Boutsianis miss-hit a Trimboli through-pass wide of the far post, while Canberra defender Toplica Popovich blocked a Coveny shot for a corner within the opening 20 minutes.

Coveny missed twice. He hit the crossbar from an Andy Vlahos through-ball in the 27th minute and headed a Boutsianis cross wide from close range three minutes later, as the Lakesiders peppered the Cosmos goal without breaking through.

At one stage, South lined up four attackers against Canberra's five defenders and still couldn't get through. Goran Lozanovski lauched a scorcher from 25 metres that Canberra 'keeper Barney Smith couldn't hold, but the ball fell wide of the post on the tick of 45 minutes.

Canberra pressed more after the break and nearly stole the lead in the 57th minute. Milton Cortes put Mark Hagger through on the right wing.

Boutsianis finally tore down the Canberra wall with a powerful free-kick from 30 metres after Trimboli was brought down. Smith got his hands to the shot but could not hold on to it, thus enabling South its 13th victory of the season.

SYDNEY UNITED 2
PARRAMATTA POWER 1

By Arvind Hickman

Sydney United have recorded a solid 2-1 victory against local rivals Parramatta Power at the Sydney United Sports Centre last Sunday, to keep their faint finals hopes alive.

United came back from a goal down at half-time largely thanks to their inspirational playmaker, Tom Pondeljak, who set up both of their goals.

The Power easily had the better chances in the first half but failed to convert, allowing United to slowly claw their way back into the game.

Sydney United Coach, Velimir Kupresak, believed his chargers showed a lot of character to come back from a first half deficit.

"Because we lost the last four or five games our confidence was down and to be down 1-0 at half time we needed to show a lot of character," he said.

"First I tried to motivate the boys and said you must win the 50-50 chances.

In the second half some players lifted up the tempo and they showed good character and that's why we won.'

Parramatta Power Coach, David Mitchell, could only reflect on what might have been had his team converted their numerous first half opportunities.

"I think we had quite a few chances in the first half even after we went up, but unfortunately we didn't bury them." You know it's a cruel game if you don't take your chances, and they came out in the second half and scored early and got on top," he said.

"You can't coach missed chances. That's the frustrating part you know, because we said at half time I hope it doesn't come back and cost us, and it did."

Joel Griffiths had the first genuine chance of the game when he sliced through two defenders from the edge of the penalty area, but his shot was well parried by United 'keeper Brett Hughes.

The Power scored the opening goal in the 23rd minute, a well worked move finished off delightfully by Matt Thompson. David Barrett crossed the ball from the right side to Damien Brown who headed back across goal. Thompson latched onto the ball with a sweet volley that rocketed into the roof of the net.

Only minutes later the Power might have increased their lead when Paul Bilokapic passed waywardly to his own goal, giving Brown the chance to pass an advancing Hughes. His shot skewed wide to the delight of the home fans.

Alex Tobin had a point blank header which he rifled over the cross bar before Brown was gifted a golden opportunity. Griffiths made an excellent run on the right and cut the ball across goal for Brown. The Power midfielder opted to try and flick the ball between his legs instead of tapping in, and unfortunately missed altogether.

United equalised four minutes after the interval through their Solomon Islands international, Commins Menapi.

The architect was intelligent playmaker, Tommy Pondeljak. Aytec Genc played a ball over the top and Pondeljak galloped through a square Power defence before passing to Menapi who walked the ball into an empty net.

Power had a chance to resurect their lead but were thwarted by a brilliant Brett Hughes save from a Thompson rocket.

The home team then took the lead in the 75th minute when Pondeljak broke again. This time he ran past a defender, regained the ball after momentarily being tackled, and played it across to Menapi who could hardly miss.

The goal capped off a memorable comeback and adds some desperate relief to United's depleted confidence tank in recent weeks. Both teams will find it hard to make the top six as they lie in eight and twelfth position respectively.

Peter Bennett (left) of Parramatta Power holds off a challenge from Sydney United's Ante Deur.

SYDNEY OLYMPIC 2
BRISBANE STRIKERS 0

By John Economos

A MIRACULOUS World class goal cracked in by midfielder Kresimir Marusic, enabled Sydney Olympic to finally bust open a defiant Brisbane Strikers last Sunday night at the Belmore Sports Ground and finally run out 2-0 winners to consolidate their second spot on the ladder, one point behind League leaders South Melbourne.

Kresimir Marusic

The miracle goal was scored nine minutes into the second session, from a similar acute angle to the Ned Zelic goal scored against Holland for Australia to qualify for the Barcelona Games. Fellow midfielder, Troy Halpin, sprayed the ball wide to the right to find Marusic who worked his way to the by-line.

From a very sharp angle, Marusic drove with his right boot a dipping shot that first cleared Brisbane's goalie Corey Baldock, then bent slightly to crashed inside the far top corner.

Substitute Greg Owens, who came on in the 77th minute to replace Marusic, doubled the scoreline just two minutes later with a crashing header .Owen himself had instigated the move that involved Lindsay Wilson and giant striker Dylan McAllister who finally nodded the opportunity back to Owens.

In the first session Brisbane methodically bottled up Olympic, paying special attention to containing both of the Sydney wingbacks, Lindsay Wilson and Elias Augerinos, from crusading down their respective flanks.

The Queensland midfield quartet of Pilic, Srhoj, Rech and Grierson were most industrious whilst strike twins Buljan and Foster did well with limited opportunities.

Olympic's ball-playing striker Pablo Cardozo as early as in the sixth minute had successive attempts from close-range denied whilst on the half hour mark Brisbane striker Peter Buljan rocked the cross-bar with a header whilst his senior partner Paul Foster screamed his effort over the top..

Brisbane's goalie, Baldock four minutes after the break denied Cardozo yet again when he turned his free-kick around his post.

Over the last 30 minutes, Olympic's Wilson repeatedly come more into the attack as the Brisbane lads started to tire,, obviously by now showing the strains of having played three matches within a week.

Olympic's win over the Queenslanders was sweet revenge for the team as the Brisbane Strikers were the first side to inflict defeat, (2-1), on the high-flying Sydney side last year in Round 8 .

Olympic's coach Branko Culina later summed up : "I saw them, (Brisbane), play in their last two games and the score flattered Souths. Brisbane is a very good team. I've seen some of the best goals scored this season such as from Goutzioulis, Owens, Doumanis and today by Marusic—it's sad that these goals don't get the coverage, (media), they deserve. Tonight the link between our midfield and attack was too wide. You need a little luck in this game and at 1-0 I was happy. Elias (Augerinos), had a great chance before halftime—," ended Culina. I brought on Owens as I felt he would help with fresh legs.

John Kosmina, Brisbane's coach, reflected: "Marusic's goal made all the difference-we don't kick anybody off the park-the first half we should have been ahead—second half we lost our way—tiredness (for loss) was part of it. Sydney Olympic is not as good as South Melbourne who I think is the best team in the League. We have missed far too many chances (scoring) this season and we've missed Glenn Gwynne's pace in our defence-we don't have a natural sweeper in our Club," ended Kosmina.

The Power Takes On Olympic

By John Economos

Parramatta Power this Sunday afternoon takes on Sydney Olympic at the Parramatta Stadium in a battle that could prove vital to many of its squad members regarding their future with the Club.

The Power has now lost its last three consecutive matches, (Wollongong, Souths and Sydney United), on the trot, leaving the side with a disappointing 28 League points from 23 outings.

The free scoring Olympic, having notched up 49 points, also boasts as having the second tightest defence in the League.

David Mitchell: Parramatta Power coach.

Mitchell stated to ABSW last night: "Last Sunday we were leading 0-1 at the break and created heaps of chances which we just couldn't put away.

"We should have been up by five goals and in the second half there were more chances even though the game evened up a lot.

"They, (United), scored from a breakaway and in a sense they did the same with their second goal.

"We had balls kicked off their goal-line," lamented Mitchell.

The Power has no players under suspension for Sunday and only captain and defender, Alex Tobin, could be in doubt.

Tobin was forced to leave the field near the end suffering from slight concussion.

"Our season you could say has come to an end already, and now we must fight for pride against one of the League's best attacking teams," Mitchell added.

Import ace-striker Joe Miller, who has been out with injury, came on late in the second half against United last Sunday.

English import central defender cum midfielder, David Lee, is understood to be soon released from his contract sometime later this week..

Les Pogliacomi: The Power's lanky and elastic, goalie.

It's been a most disappointing season for the Power after having made a reasonable start.

It's understood that all of the Power's contracted, or out of contract players, will be under review with a complete overhaul expected to be made of the squad by the Club's management at the end of the season.

It's Mitchell's burning passion to make the Power the strongest team in the League.

The Power's young midfielder, Matt Thompson, last Sunday against Sydney United, not only was his team's best performer despite their loss, but also managed to score his first goal for the Club.

The Power's stringbean goalie, Les Pogliacomi, who last Sunday took over the custodian's role from out-of-favour Andrew Crews, and did relatively well, is expected to retain his position for the Olympic match.

Meanwhile in contrast, Sydney Olympic's confident central marker, Scott Baillie, with his team strongly sitting right on the League leader's, (South Melbourne), hammer, stated to ABSW: "I saw the Power against Souths and they looked ordinary for some reason.

"They seem to have lost much of their confidence in recent weeks.

"In reality they have the players to do the job, but if we play our normal game we should win. We do have a better side.

"They, (the Power), are coming off a string of losses and they will be desperate.

"We have a good defence and if we can get our 'quick' boys going, we will really test them out.

"Nick, (Carle), and Greg, (Owens), were back from national duties last week and showed that we have quality in our depth."

Baillie ended with: "Our aim of course is to finish the League in either first or second spot.

"That's our burning desire."

Scott Baillie: Sydney Olympic's reliable central marker.

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Stallions Seek Top Six for Play-Off

MARCONI STALLIONS

On Saturday night at the Marconi stadium, the Stallions will host Northern Spirit in a derby game, which they honestly must win to strenghten their presence in the top six.

Events of the past fortnight have been a potpourri of bitter-sweet for the Stallions.

In Round 22, decided at home penultimate weekend, they scraped through beleaguered Eastern Pride 2-1, but lost their hard-working striker and goal-machine, Archie Thompson to an unfortunate redcard.

Last week at the Westpac Stadium in Wellington, they went down to a late goal by Football Knigz' Harry Ngata, which condemned them to only their sixth defeat all season-long.

Eddie Krncevic: Marconi Stallions head coach.

Notwithstanding the outcome of the Kingz' game, Marconi's highly-revered coach, Eddie Krncevic believes they can bounce and reignite the fire of a successful campaign this season.In his words, "I must say I am a bit disappointed. With only seven games to play before the playoffs, this match against the Kingz in Wellington was a crucial one for us to win, not only to maintain our top-six status, but to keep our hopes of a top two finish alive."

Despite the presence of returnees Angelo Costanzo and Archie Thompson back from international duty with the Socceroos, the Stallions spoilt what would have been a fair reward for a hard day's job by conceeding the 87th minute winner by Ngata.

Against neighbours Northern Spirit this weekend, there clearly will be no excuses as the Stallions have to win, and win well, if they are to avoid any red-faces in the stands, as well as a potentially-tensed finish in six weeks time, when the season will draw to an end.

Sweeper and experienced international, Pan-Keun Kim, ought to have overcome his ankle strain to help spearhead the Stallions' back four, where he will operate with captain Dominic Longo and the skilled Vlado Zoric in the midfield.

Brendan Renaud: Marconi's rising midfielder.

As always, the Stallions will be looking up to returning Thompson, who missed the game with Football Kingz, as well as ever-improving John Gibson.

Kris Trajanovski and Christian Care will be called upon by Krncevic to lend vital support to the attack in an effort to break down Spirit's defence.

Mickey Hickman: Northern Spirit coach.

Apart from frontrunners South Melbourne and Sydney Olympic, Marconi boast the best defensive record, having conceeded 30 goals so far. Surely they will not want to add to that deficit, while pumping in goals into the net of their opponents who had a much-needed rest last week.

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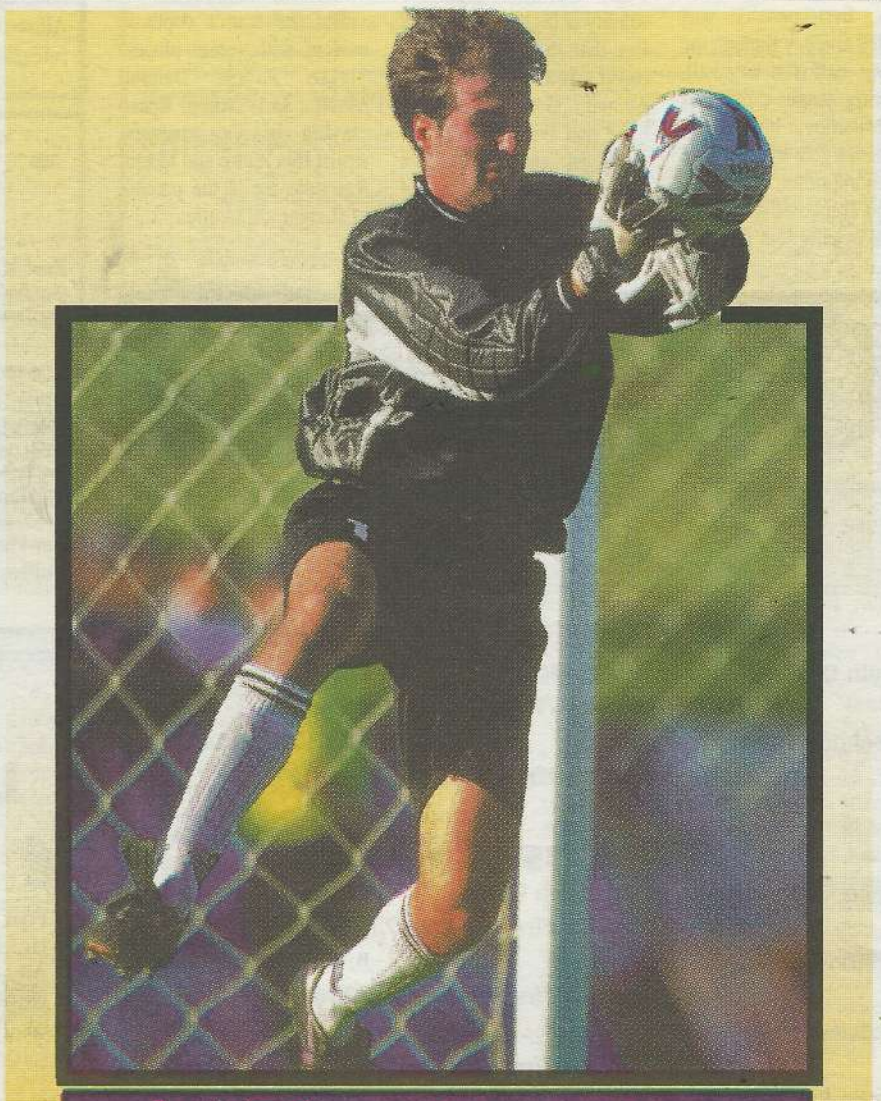

David Aceski: Marconi Stallion's reliable goalkeeper.

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ROUND 7

SAINTS AIM FOR LEAGUE LEAD

By David Davutovic

ST ALBANS SAINTS 1
HEIDELBERG 0

St Albans Saints defeated Heidelberg 1-0 at Churchill Reserve last Sunday and is in fifth position, but with a game in hand, they could go to the top of the table.

An own goal sank the Bergers and the slender victory was not a true reflection of the match, as the Saints missed two penalties before snatching an 88th minute winner through Ante Kelic.

The first penalty was awarded midway through the opening half for handball, but gritty young midfielder Tom Milardovic hit the post and the Bergers were handed an early reprieve.

Mijo Trupkovic earned the second penalty less than fifteen minutes into the second half when keeper Jim Kourtis brought him down as Trupkovic attempted to round him.

Fellow keeper Marjan Vunderl had his penalty saved as the Saints' atrocious penalty record continued, with their third failure in two weeks.

The winner came after Trupkovic fired in a cross from the right side and Kelic rose to meet the ball on the back post and headed it home for an emotional victory.

But the ball must have touched a Heidelberg player on the way, because the score was later recorded as an own goal.

St Albans' defensive solidity is highlighted by the fact that they haven't conceded a goal in three matches, with Goran Mrak, Joe Cuze and Ivica Klarica resolute in their defensive duties against the likes of Alfonso Opazo, Nick Lazarevski and Peter Kakos.

Saints coach Peter Crocker inspired the squad pre-match when he mentioned the controversial transfer of VPL Player of the Year Damian Vojtek to Heidelberg. The Saints were awarded a mere $3,000 in compensation.

Mark Paleka made his senior debut for the Saints in the 80th minute.

But the team's depth is evident with senior players Slavko Rados, Damian Movric and Danny Benac playing in the reserves, whilst Ilija Rados and Martin Raspudic are in the process of shaking off injuries.

MAGIC HOLDS-OFF GULLY

ALTONA MAGIC 0
GREEN GULLY 0

Altona Magic, playing with ten men for the last seven minutes, held titleholder Green Gully to a 0-0 draw at Paisley Reserve last Saturday night.

The best chance of the match fell to Altona striker Sash Becvinovski in the 68th minute, but the former Gully forward appeared too anxious and put his shot wide of the far post from a Tony Trifunov through-ball.

The Cavaliers were denied a winning goal three minutes into stoppage time when substitute Steve Martin struck a bouncing header into the net.

But referee Bruno D'Aniello disallowed the last-gasp strike indicating Martin has pushed his opponent before heading the ball.

D'Aniello gave Slave Bozinovski his marching orders in the 83rd minute after the player had committed a second bookable offence, a tackle from behind that was worthy of a red card alone.

Green Gully coach Ian Dobson believes his more experienced players aren't "hungry" enough anymore after two league titles, while the younger brigade is too inexperienced to maintain the previous standard.

Nevertheless, the Cavaliers are in sixth place, just outside the top five, with plenty of rounds remaining. Altona is in ninth place and aiming to climb the ladder under new coach Frank McGrellis.

Altona Magic fielded much-travelled striker John Markovski for the second time, while its other signing Joe Tricarico is another two or three weeks away from entering the side. Both players were at defunct Carlton.

"Our forwards didn't create enough chances. The disappointing thing is we're encouraging people to get the ball into the box, but it isn't happening," McGrellis said.

McGrellis wasn't pleased with the sending off. "The boy lost his cool, first with a late tackle and then from behind. That went against us in the last few minutes. Fortunately, we got out of jail with the disallowed goal," he said.

• TOP SCORERS •

After Round 7

Player	Club	Goals
Juan Nilo	Bentleigh Greens	6
Peter Psarros	Port Melb Sharks	6
Nick Tsaltas	Port Melb Sharks	6
Alfonso Opazo	Heidelberg United	5
John Dimitrelos	Altona East Phoenix	4

Sharks dethrone Royals

PORT MELBOURNE SHARKS 4
ESSENDON ROYALS 1

By John Rigas

Port Melbourne Sharks handed out a 4-1 thrashing to the struggling Essendon Royals, who are bottom of the ladder.

The premier league newcomers are still searching for their fist win of the season and were no match for the league leader at a rain-swept Anderson Reserve last Friday night.

Port had winners around the ground, with Tas Psonis, Sam Poutakidis dominating and scoring.

Essendon had an opportunity within five minutes, but Matthew Collina's strike went narrowly wide after a one-on-one with Port goal keeper Steve Wardle.

Moments later Poutakidis powered his way through the Essendon defence, but his strike from 15 metres flew over the woodwork.

In the 23rd minute Port striker Nick Tsaltas took on Essendon's defence, but his powerful strike was palmed away by 'keeper Mark Di Gioacchino.

Minutes later Tsaltas had another opportunity to open the scoring but he hit the post.

However, an own goal by David Turkovic in the 30th minute gave Port the lead at half-time.

Shortly after the break Poutakidis struck the side-netting with the goal exposed, but Tsaltas found the net in the 56th minute from a fine run by Psodis.

Essendon striker Collina was sent off after two bookable offences midway through the second half, however, Steven Tribuzio pegged a goal back for the visitors in the 67th minute from a Rocky Divitto cross.

But Psonis added Port's third goal with a cracking half-volley in the 77th minute and Poutakidis rounded off the scoring in the 88th minute with a low shot from 15 metres.

• RESULTS •

ROUND 7

Friday 16 March 2001

Port Melb Sharks	4	Essendon Royals	1
(Sam Poutakidis, Nick Tsaltas, Tass Psonis, own goal)		*(Steven Tribuzio)*	

Saturday 17 March 2001

Altona Magic	0	Green Gully Cavaliers	0

Sunday 18 March 2001

Bentleigh Greens	4	Altona East Phoenix	1
(Craig Lewis, Juan Nilo, Stelios Drakos,) Paul Byrne)		*(John Dimitrelos)*	
St Albans Saints	1	Heidelberg United	0
(own goal)			
Fawkner Blues	0	Dandenong Thunder	0
Bulleen Zebras	0	Preston Lions	1
		(Tony Josevski)	

VIC PREMIER LEAGUE LADDER

(AFTER ROUND 7)

	P	W	D.	L	F	A	Pts
Port Melbourne Sharks	7	5	0	2	19	8	15
Heidelberg United	7	5	0	2	9	4	15
Altona East Phoenix	7	5	0	2	12	11	15
Bentleigh Greens	7	4	2	1	14	5	14
St. Albans Saints	6	4	1	1	11	5	13
Green Gully Cavaliers	7	3	1	3	11	11	10
Preston Lions	7	3	1	3	6	8	10
Fawkner Blues	7	1	4	2	5	8	7
Altona Magic	7	1	3	3	4	9	6
Bulleen Zebras	6	1	2	3	6	7	5
Dandenong Thunder	7	0	3	4	4	13	3
Essendon Royals	7	0	1	6	5	17	1

Victorian Premier League

ROUND 8

SATURDAY 24TH MARCH

South Dandenong vs Altona Magic — George Andrew Reserve
U21: 1.00pm • First Grade: 3.00pm

Essendon vs St Albans Saints — Epping Soccer Stadium
U21: 1.00pm • First Grade: 3.00pm

SUNDAY 25TH MARCH

Green Gully Cavaliers vs Bentleigh Greens — Green Gully Reserve
U21: 5.00pm • First Grade: 7.00pm

Preston Lions vs Fawkner Blues — B.T. Connor Reserve
U21: 1.00pm • First Grade: 3.00pm

Heidelberg Utd vs Bulleen Zebras — Olympic Park
U21: 5.00pm • First Grade: 7.00pm

Altona East Phoenix vs Port Melb Sharks — Paisley Reserve
U21: 1.00pm • First Grade: 3.00pm

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XXXX LEAGUE

	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Brisbane Lions	3	2	1	0	12	6	7
Brisbane City	3	2	1	0	9	5	7
Wynnum	3	1	2	0	6	5	5
Mt Gravatt	3	1	1	1	10	8	4
Taringa Rovers	2	1	1	0	3	1	4
IPSW Knights	3	1	1	1	7	6	4
T'wmba Raiders	3	1	1	1	5	6	4
Gold Coast City	2	1	0	1	6	6	3
Eastern Suburbs	3	1	0	2	4	7	3
B'berg Waves	3	1	0	2	6	10	3
Rochedale Rov	3	0	1	2	4	6	1
Pine Rivers Utd	3	0	1	2	7	13	1

ROUND 3

Brisbane City	5	T'wmba Raiders	2
Brisbane Lions	7	B'berg Waves	2
Rochedale Rov	0	Wynnum	1
Taringa Rovers	3	IPSW Knights	1
Eastern Suburbs	3	Gold Coast City	2
Mt Gravatt	5	Pine Rivers Utd	2

DIVISION 1 XXXX RESERVES

	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Rochedale Rovers	3	3	0	0	9	3	9
Rochedale Rov	3	3	0	0	6	1	9
Brisbane Lions	3	2	0	1	11	4	6
Wynnum	3	1	1	1	8	7	4
Mt Gravatt	3	1	1	1	5	6	4
IPSW Knights	3	1	0	2	4	2	3
Eastern Suburbs	3	1	0	2	3	3	3
Gold Coast City	2	1	0	1	3	3	3
Taringa Rovers	2	1	0	1	1	2	3
T'wmba Raiders	3	1	0	2	2	7	3
B'berg Waves	3	1	0	2	2	8	3
Pine Rivers Utd	3	0	0	3	2	10	0

ROUND 3

Brisbane CIty	4	T'wmba Raiders	0
Brisbane Lions	6	B'berg Waves	0
Rochedale Rov	2	Wynnum	0
Taringa Rovers	1	IPSW Knights	0
Eastern Suburbs	0	Gold Coast City	2
Mt Gravatt	1	Pine Rivers Utd	0

DIVISION 1 XXXX YOUTH

	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Wynnum	3	3	0	0	9	6	9
Brisbane Lions	2	2	0	0	6	0	6
Taringa Rovers	2	2	0	0	9	4	6
Sunshine Coast	3	2	0	1	8	7	6
T'wmba Raiders	3	2	0	1	7	6	6
Gold Coast City	2	1	1	0	1	0	4
Rochedale Rov	3	1	0	2	4	4	3
Pine Rivers Utd	3	1	0	2	3	5	3
IPSW Knights	3	1	0	2	5	8	3
Eastern Suburbs	3	0	1	2	1	5	1
Mt Gravatt	2	0	0	2	4	6	0
Brisbane City	3	0	0	3	3	9	0

ROUND 3

Brisbane City	1	T'wmba raiders	3
Brisbane Lions	4	Sunshine Coast	0
Rochedale Rov	1	Wynnum	2
Taringa Rovers	4	IPSW Knights	1
Eastern Suburbs	0	Gold Coast City	0
Mt Gravatt	0	Pine Rivers Utd	1

DIVISION 1 SEMI PRO

	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Slacks Creek	4	4	0	0	15	4	12
The Gap	4	3	1	0	8	4	10
Brisbnae Olympic Utd	4	2	2	0	10	5	8
Redlands Utd	4	2	2	0	10	6	8
North Star	4	1	3	0	10	7	6
Albany Creek	4	1	2	1	7	7	5
Capalaba	4	1	2	1	6	8	5
Rocklea Utd	4	1	2	1	5	7	5
Souths Utd	3	1	1	1	6	5	4
Grange Thistle	4	1	0	3	5	7	3
Newmarket	3	1	0	2	5	7	3
Mitchelton	4	1	0	3	5	9	3
Acacia Ridge	4	0	1	3	4	13	1
North Pine	4	0	0	4	3	10	0

ROUND 4

Acacia Ridge	0	The Gap	2
Albany Creek	2	North Star	2
Capalaba	2	Mitchelton	1
Grange Thistle	2	Slacks Creek	3
Rocklea Utd	1	Redlands Utd	4
Newmarket	0	Brisbane Olympic Utd	4
Souths Utd	4	North Pine	2

DIVISION 1 SEMI PRO Reserves

	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Souths Utd	4	4	0	0	15	5	12
Redlands Utd	4	4	0	0	12	3	12
Slacks Creek	4	3	0	1	10	3	9
North Star	4	2	2	0	9	5	8
Mitchelton	4	2	1	1	11	4	7
Newmarket	4	2	0	2	11	10	6
Rocklea Utd	4	2	0	2	13	15	6
Albany Creek	4	1	2	1	5	5	5
The Gap	4	1	1	2	10	9	4
Brisbane Olympic Utd	4	1	0	3	11	15	3
Capalaba	4	1	0	3	5	12	3
Acacia Ridge	4	1	0	3	2	11	3
Grange Thistle	4	1	0	3	5	15	3
North Pine	4	0	0	4	7	15	0

ROUND 4

Acacia Ridge	2	The Gap	1
Albany Creek	2	North Star	2
Capalaba	1	Mitchelton	4
Grange Thistle	1	Slacks Creek	5
Rocklea Utd	1	Redlands Utd	3
Newmarket	7	Brisbane Olympic Utd	2
Souths Utd	5	North Pine	0

DIVISION 1 SEMI PRO Youth

	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Souths Utd	4	4	0	0	23	4	12
Capalaba	4	4	0	0	19	3	12
Acacia Ridge	3	3	0	0	16	1	9
Redlands Utd	4	2	1	1	8	7	7
Newmarket	3	2	0	1	6	7	6
Rocklea Utd	4	1	2	1	6	9	5
North Pine	4	1	1	2	7	10	4
Albany Creek	4	1	0	3	7	8	3
Brisbane Olympic Utd	3	1	0	2	5	8	3
Mitchelton	3	1	0	2	2	8	3
Grange Thistle	4	1	0	3	7	14	3
Slacks Creek	4	1	0	3	5	19	3
North Star	1	0	0	1	2	6	0
The Gap	3	0	0	3	4	13	0

ROUND 4

Acacia Ridge	4	The Gap	1
Albany Creek	6	North Star	2
Capalaba	4	Mitchelton	1
Grange Thistle	5	Slacks Creek	3
Rocklea Utd	0	Redlands Utd	0
Souths Utd	5	North Pine	1

Newmarket v Brisbane Olympic United (to be played)

Bannon out, Cooper in at Rochedale

By Glenn Davis

The Premier League season was just two weeks into the season when it claimed its first coaching scalp last week with the shock resignation of Rochedale Rovers coach Peter Bannon.

Bannon, 53, regarded as one of the State's top coaches, quit for personal reasons denying speculation it followed rumoured financial problems at Rochedale. "It has nothing to do with the club and is purely for personal reasons," Bannon said. "In fact I'd like to thank the club for their support over the years and wish them all the luck in the future."

Bannon, who believes the standard of coaching in Queensland is at a high level, said his decision to quit after 30 years coaching was no reflection on Rochedale's performance on or off the field. "I know about the financial rumours at the club but it's nothing to do with it," he said.

Bannon, however, admitted he was disappointed at losing two of his top players in the off season when striker Matt Olley and goalkeeper Todd Rumble were poached by Brisbane Lions.

The sacking proved a blessing as Bannon moved onto North Star for the next two years where he won the double — the premiership and grand final in one season.

Bannon enjoyed more than three years with the "Rovers" taking the club to its first championship in 1999, a year after losing the grand final.

Bannon has been replaced at Rochedale by former national league and Rochedale stalwart Keiran Cooper.

"I'm looking forward to it as the club has a lot of good boys coming through, "Coops said." Coaching premier league is not something I'd planned but it's an opportunity that has just come along.

"It may seem hard to some having once been a player at the club but I've got the players respect. "It's a nice challenge."

The likeable Irishman couldn't have taken over at a better time on St Patrick's Day against Wynnum last Saturday night. Cooper has been at Rochedale for 11 years but retired from playing two seasons ago.

He's been the club's football administrative officer for ten years since leaving Brisbane City where he played for five years, including one season in the national league.

Cooper, a former Irish junior international, got his first real taste of coaching top level football last season when he assisted Miron Bleiberg in his Queensland coaching duties.

QLD PREMIER LEAGUE WRAP-UPS By Glenn Davis

By Glenn Davis

Mt Gravatt coach Mal Bland is a lot happier man these days and is confident last season's cellar dwellars are beginning to reap the benefits of a three-year plan after their resounding 5-2 home win against Pine Rivers on Saturday night.

The Hawks victory was their first of the new season and came on top of a narrow 4-3 loss against Brisbane Lions last round.

Mt Gravatt took control of their Pine Rivers clash in the opening half building up a 4-0 half time lead after a dominant first half performance.

Striker Alan Bullpitt started the ball rolling slotting home in the 15th minute then midfielder Nash Catchlove put the home side up by two goals within a minute.

Pine Rivers trailed by three after an own goal midway through the opening half before midfielder Aaron Baldwin scored two minutes from the interval to give Mt Gravatt a shock 4-nil lead at the break.Substitute midfielder Robert Miljkovic scored Mt Gravatt's fifth with a spectacular 25 metre left foot shot past Pine Rivers keeper Peter Underhill who tried valiantly to save what some are already saying will be the goal of the season.

Bland agreed with rival coach Steve Dolan the match was much closer than the scoreline indicated.

"I thought the turning point was in the first half when they missed a penalty when we were leading 2-0," Bland said.

"They played very well in the second half and had a few things gone their way could have grabbed a draw.

"I implemented a three-year plan last season and I'll be estactic if we can finish mid-table."

Dolan gained some heart from Pine Rivers second half performance especially after midfielder Craig Davey was controversially sent-off with 20 minutes remaining.

"We were shot ducks at half time but I thought their first goal was a mile offside," Dolan said.

For Dolan the turning point was when Pine Rivers were trailing 4-2 and on top in the second half when Joel Hale missed a sitter in front which could have reduced Mt Gravatt's lead to one.

Pine Rivers' goals came from last weekend's scorers Lou Harris and Dean Almond.

Meanwhile the luck of the Irish didn't favour coach Keiran Cooper and Rochedale Rovers which went down 1-0 at home to Wynnum.

Irishman Cooper was in charge of Rochedale for the first time following the shock resignation last week of coach Peter Bannon who quit for personal reasons.

Wynnum led 1-0 at the break after striker Scott Rocker was given two bites at the cherry before slotting home a cross from Anthony Roche at the near post.

Wynnum coach Peter Tokesi felt his side should have won by more but did not capitalise on their chances.

"Scott Rocker had three one-on-ones with the keeper and didn't find the target," he said.

"He'a little bit out of form missing some easy chances and is lacking a bit of confidence but now that he's scored he should settle down."

Tokesi said he was pleased his side was creating chances unlike Rochedale which hardly had a shot on goal.

"Rochedale found it hard to penetrate us and we restricted them to mostly long range shots," he said.

In other upsets Taringa Rovers knocked Ipswich Knghts from the top of the table with a 3-1 win at home while Easts scored their first win of the season downing Gold Coast 3-2 in a thriller.

Brisbane Lions scored four second half goals before thrashing Bundaberg 7-2 while Brisbane City served notice they were also back to their best with strong 5-2 win against Toowoomba.

At Heath Park, Easts led 2-1 at half time after goals by Joachim Klein and Shane Coffey while Matt Hughes scored after the break to give the Tigers their first win of the season.

Gold Coast's goals both came from the penalty spot from Adam Poric while Easts' Jason Feck missed an earlier penalty for the Tigers.

QUEENSLAND PREMIER LEAGUE

FIXTURES ROUND 4

Saturday 24th March

B'berg Waves v Mt Gravatt	7.00pm
TBA Raiders v Brisbane Lions	7.00pm
Gold Coast v Brisbane City	7.00pm
Wynnum v Taringa Rovers	7.00pm
Pine Rivers v Rochedale Rovers	7.00pm

Sunday 25th March

IPSW Knights v Eastern Suburbs	2.45pm

EAGLES HOLD DEVILS

By Graham Cooke

A penalty miss by leading scorer Steve Lazzari robbed Belconnen Blue Devils of a winning finish to their inaugural NSW Premier League season, drawing 2-2 with Parramatta Eagles in Canberra on Saturday.

With 78 minutes gone and the scores locked, Lazzari stepped up to take the kick after George Cattanach, who had come on just three minutes earlier, was brought down in the area.

Usually quite deadly in these situations, his shot lacked power and an astonished Michael Xuereb, in the Parramatta goal, had little to do to save.

Knowing any faint chance they had of making the final four rested on a win, Belconnen led twice in the game, but the second-placed Eagles hit back on both occasions.

The home side took the lead in the seventh minute. Scott Manson caused momentary confusion in the Parramatta defence, and the ball came out to Craig Unwin who cracked it back and into the net.

The lead lasted five minutes. Danial Cummins' well-struck shot was only parried by goalkeeper Anthony Giannasca and Ballamodon Cummins, coming in at the far post, was left with a simple tap-in.

Unwin, who has waited all season to score in this competition, repeated the feat shortly before half time, finishing off a move which had begun with Giannasca in the Devils' penalty area, but once again the Eagles came back and once again Cummins was the scorer, completing a fluid move which also involved Jim Bakis and Anthony Mittiga.

Cattanach gave Belconnen some hope with two late chances, both well saved, and Geoff Howarth saw his shot half blocked by Xuereb and then cleared off the line, but overall the Eagles were less shot shy and Giannasca saved his side on a number of occasions.

Belconnen coach Lino Fiorese said he was happy with a team which were just a shade off the top four in their first season at this level of competition.

"We denied Parramatta the three points and cost them second place in the competition. It was always going to be a tough game to end with," he said.

"We now plan for the next season and I'll be keeping an eye on players during the winter who we can sign with the aim of strengthening the squad. Two or three additions of the right quality will make us a very formidable side."

NNSWSF President's Cup 2001

The Presidents Cup is a pre-season competition involving the Federation's First Division Clubs (the First Division is also named the NBN State Soccer League).

The Cup is split into to two groups of five teams with the winner of each group after the preliminary rounds to play-off for the President Cup. Teams coming second in each group will play for third place. Play-off matches are set for Sunday 8th April with the venue to be advised.

While leading clubs Hamilton Olympic (reigning Major Premiers) and Edgeworth Eagles (Minor Premiers & President cup Holders) are expected to once again exert their dominance in Northern Soccer, much interest surrounds the West Wallsend SC who are newly promoted to the NBN State League this year. Broadmeadow Magic under new coach Steve Bland are also hoping to please their large support base with some silverware while Cessnock and south Cardiff have been granted the Dark Horse status.

ROUND 2 – Match Report

Hamilton Olympic	2
West Wallsend	2

In the first match of this competition (as all games last week were washed out), new boys West Wallsend gave the reigning champions a run for their money, especially in the first half.

Westy made the most of their chances and were leading 2-0 by the 20th minute and kept it until half time as it seemed Olympic were still suffering hangovers from last year's grand final win.

"We put in a very poor first half as it seemed the boys were just going thru the motions," said Olympic coach Greg Smith. At the break, Smith made the point of reminding them that they just can't turn up to a game and expect to win without putting in the effort, as having won the Grand Final three years running, every team will be out to knock Olympic off their perch.

It must of worked as the second half was mainly one-way traffic as Olympic pushed forward and scored with goals from Paul Devine (60th minute) and replacement David Hodgson in the 80th.

Hamilton had further chances to steal the match, with the best chance falling for young Chris Tancheski but his curling shot bent past the outside of the post in the final minutes.

KAISER'S CORNER

By Ken Kaiser

The Northern NSW Soccer Federation's 11 Association Directors of coaching were in Port Macquarie last weekend for the first of the Federation's coaching and development seminars.

Bruce Tracey and I will be working with the coaches discussing the coaching and development in each association, as well as ways in which we can improve and meet the needs of both players and coaches.

NNSW has completed its program of "Level 0 Administration Course" provided to all its associations. These courses assist our association volunteers in the areas of administration, litigation, child protection, insurance and the use of the internet.

NSW Institute of Sport scholarship holder, John Bradbury has relocated from Byron Bay to Newcastle and has joined the Newcastle United U/17 Squad. John has been a member of the Federation's North Coast TI Program for the last three years and will join colleagues, Adam & Ben Hughes who have relocated from Lismore and are part of a group of very promising young players signed with United.

Finally, a warm welcome and good luck to all our NSW SYL squads that started last Saturday. The federation would also like to thank Like Macquarie Junior Soccer Club in assisting us with training facilities for the Newcastle United youth teams.

NATIONAL YOUTH LEAGUE

SOUTHERN DIVISION - RD 21

LEADING SCORERS

Name	Team	Goals
Steve Manceski	**South Melbourne**	**26**
Nick Waite	Carlton Peninsula Blues	14
Denis Mustac	Eastern Pride	13
Brett Cunningham	Fawkner Blues	10
Veton Korcarevski	South Dandenong	10
Aref El Dib	South Melb Eagles Ac	10
Carlo Melina	Carlton Peninsula Blues	9
Robert Dolevski	Preston Lions	9
Viktor Memeti	South Dandenong	9

LEAGUE LADDER

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Eastern Pride	**19**	**16**	**1**	**2**	**61**	**11**	**49**
South Melb Institute	18	16	0	2	97	21	48
VIS	21	12	3	6	53	34	39
Melbourne Knights	18	12	0	6	51	21	36
Peninsula Blues	17	11	1	5	46	21	34
Melb Knights Aca	18	9	1	8	22	27	28
South Dandenong	17	7	3	7	31	32	24
South Melb Eagles Ac	18	7	2	9	27	37	23
Green Gully Cavaliers	18	5	4	9	23	33	19
Bulleen Zebras	19	3	4	12	25	56	13
Albury Wodonga	19	3	4	12	17	50	13
Fawkner Blues	18	3	1	14	22	61	10
Preston Lions	18	3	0	15	20	91	9

By Roy Hay

Bulleen Zebras 1
South Melbourne 5

In a tough game at C B Smith Reserve last Wednesday South Melbourne regained top spot on the ladder with a five-one win over Bulleen Zebras. Bulleen actually took the lead through Luigi Gullaci in the 40th minute, but he was sent off for his second yellow card five minutes later along with Lester McEvoy of South Melbourne, also for a second yellow.

A minute earlier South had equalized through Dimtri Tsiaras. It was not till the 70the minute that South went ahead through top scorer Steve Manceski.

Steve Esposito extended the lead with a penalty in 82 minutes, Sahim Rahim made it four a minute later, then came the goal of the game with a spectacular free kick by Theo Petidis in 87 minutes.

Melbourne Knights Aca 1
Preston Lions 3

Soccer is a roller-coaster game as the Melbourne Knights Academy discovered when it went down by three goals to one at home to Preston Lions, just a week after upsetting its own youth team.

Robert Dolevski's excellent goal after only 8 minutes put the Lions in front but it was not till the second half that they were able to add a second from Ice Konjarski.

Nevan Antic reduced the arrears in 66 minutes, but Preston was not going to give up its victory and Pece Dimovski scored the third goal with three minutes left to play. Tops for the Lions, which had four players from the reserves to stiffen the side, were Dolevski, Robert Mitrevski and Nicolce Citanovski.

Nevan Antic and Ahmet Ikiz stood out for the Knights. Two players, Luke Udurovic and Ahmet Ikiz have been promoted from the Development squad to the Academy.

Eastern Pride 1
Melbourne Knights 0

Eastern Pride climbed back to the top on Saturday with a narrow one-nil win over Melbourne Knights at Mobil Stadium. The Knights had five seniors in the line-up but the Pride matched them with top scorer Denis Mustac getting the only goal after 25 minutes. The Pride missed a penalty kick which ensured that the result remained in doubt until the end. Coach Stan Webster reports, 'Eastern Pride boys put on their best perfomance of the season on a rain soaked pitch and despite having to field a very depleted team against a Knights youth with no less than five senior players in their starting eleven, John, Zelic, Zold, Rajher and Sulemani.

The Pride were missing Walmaggia, Trebbia (both suspended), Ashby (injured), Pardo (seniors) and Simon Webster (replaced 60 minutes for senior bench). Add to that Elvin (sent-off 65th minute) and Mustac (penalty miss 70th minute). As you would understand I was delighted with the boys and the result which should at least keep us in front of South Melbourne until tomorrow evening.'

ROUND 21 RESULTS

Round 20
Wednesday 14 March 2001
Bulleen Zebras 1 (Luigi Gullaci) **South Melbourne 5** (Dimtri Tsiaras, Steve Manceski, Steve Esposito, Sahim Rahim, Theo Petidis)
Round 21
Friday 16 March 2001
Melbourne Knights Academy 1 (Nevan Antic) **Preston Lions 3** (Robert Dolevski, Ice Konjarski, Pece Dimovski)
Saturday 17 March 2001
Eastern Pride 1 (Denis Mustac)
Melbourne Knights 0
VIS 5 (Frank Lagana, Ricky Chillico, Serkan Oksuz, Ibrahim Ibraimi, Spase Dilevski) **Fawkner Blues 2** (Ross Lagana, Michael Amadeo)
Sunday 18 March 2001
Albury-Wodonga 1 (Quentin O'Grady)
South Melbourne Eagles Ac 1 (Mario Kalakias)
Monday 19 March 2001
South Melbourne v Peninsula Blues
(Bob Jane Stadium, 7 pm)
Bye v Green Gully
Bye v South Dandenong
Bye v Bulleen Zebras

ROUND 22 FIXTURES

Saturday 24 March 2001
Fawkner Blues v Green Gully,
(C. B. Smith Reserve, 4 pm)
Preston Lions v Eastern Pride,
(BT Connor Reserve, 4 pm)

Sunday 25 March 2001
Melbourne Knights v V I S,
(Knights Stadium, 4 pm)
Sth Dandenong v Sth Melb Eagles Acad,
(George Andrews Reserve, 4 pm)

Wednesday 28 March 2001
Bulleen Zebras v Melbourne Knights Academy, (Veneto Club, 7 pm)
Bye v Albury-Wodonga
Bye v Peninsula Blues
Bye v South Melbourne

NORTHERN DIVISION - RD 23

ROUND 11

Northern Spirit .....1 QAS 2

ROUND 23
FRIDAY 16 MARC H 2001

Wollongong Wolves .....1 Newcastle Youth 1
NSWIS .....2 Marconi Youth 1

SATURDAY 17 MARCH 2001

Sydney United .....0 Parramatta Power ..1
AIS .....4 ACT Academy 0

SUNDAY 18 MARCH 2001

Marconi Stallions Colts ....4 Canberra Cosmos ...2
Sydney Olympic Youth ....1 QAS 2

ROUND 24 FIXTURES

Wollongong Wolves Vs Marconi Stallions Colts
5:00pm WIN Stadium
Newcastle United Youth Vs ACT Academy.
5:15pm Marathon Stadium
Canberra Cosmos Vs Sydney United 4:00pm Bruce Stadium
Sydney Olympic Academy Vs NSWIS 4:00pm Wentworth Park
Parramatta Power Vs Sydney Olympic Youth 7.00pm Melita Stadium
Marconi Stallions Youth Vs Northern Spirit
5:00pm Marconi Stadium
QAS Vs Newcastle United Colts 4:00pm Ballymore
BYE - AIS
NSWIS Vs Marconi Stallions Colts 6:30pm
Valentine Sports Park

	P	W	D	B	L	F	A	Pts
A.I.S.	**22**	**18**	**3**	**1**	**1**	**62**	**22**	**57**
Parramatta Power	21	14	2	1	5	60	30	44
Marconi Stallions	18	12	2	1	4	41	14	39
Northern Spirit	21	12	3	2	6	46	29	39
Newcastle United	20	11	3	1	6	39	24	36
Wollongong Wolves	20	10	5	2	5	42	21	35
Q.A.S.	23	10	1	1	12	37	54	31
Marconi Stallions Colts	19	10	0	2	9	42	33	30
Sydney Olympic	20	9	3	2	8	46	40	30
N.S.W.I.S.	22	9	3	2	10	29	45	30
Sydney United	22	9	1	2	12	40	43	28
Canberra Cosmos	21	7	3	2	11	42	42	24
Sydney Olympic Academy	21	3	5	1	13	28	47	14
Newcastle United Colts	19	2	0	2	16	12	51	6
ACT Academy	22	1	2	1	19	11	79	5

NSW Premier League

VALENTINE SPORTS PARK

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NSW Premier League

ROUND 18

WRAP-UPS

St George 1
Bonnyrigg 3

Bonnyrigg staged a brilliant second half to overcome a 1-0 half-time deficit and defeat St George 3-1 at St.George Stadium.

Led by striker Robert Gomez and midfielders Javier Mancino and David Reid, Bonnyrigg cut loose in the second half with three unanswered goals, two from Gomez and one from makeshift striker Michael Hawrysiuk.

The win lifts Bonnyrigg into second spot on goal difference and sets them up for a showdown with arch rival and defending champions Blacktown City next weekend.

Penrith 2
Central Coast 2

The Penrith Panthers and Central Coast Coasties finished the NSW Premier League season with a 2-2 draw at Andrews Road Field.

The Panthers took a deserved lead on 36 minutes through Luke Boyd, but Peter Preston leveled the scores immediately after the break. Penrith were hit by the dismissal of David Gardiner just after the hour mark, but still managed to go ahead through Osvaldo El Ali.

Mick Williams made it 2-2 just thee minutes later, but despite coming close through a Shaun Matthews free-kick the Coasties never looked like making their extra man pay.

Blacktown City 2
C'bury M'ville 5

Canterbury-Marrickville carved up a disappointing Blacktown City with a 5-2 win at Gabbie Stadium, to snatch the fourth finals place.

When Zack Donev opened the scoring with an uncontested header after 12 minutes, it appeared the Demons were back in town after some indifferent recent form.

Astonishingly, they were 1-3 down 8 minutes later after goals from Kotsopoulos, Amegashie and Kyriazopoulos.

Blacktown pulled one back through Willard at 70 minutes, but the two-goal lead was restored by Kotsopoulos a minute later. Yane Talcevski completed the rout with an unstoppable free-kick from 20 yards with 5 minutes remaining.

Sutherland 1
Leichhardt 4

Leichhardt Tigers disappointing season ended with a comprehensive 4-1 victory over Sutherland at Seymour Shaw on Saturday night.

Whilst they created enough clear cut chances to have won by an even bigger margin, it wasn't until 20 minutes to go that the Tigers finally hit the front.

With the Sharks fielding several teenagers including two that had played a full match in the Under 19's, it was no surprise that the home team capitulated somewhat in the latter stages of the game.

Sharks Dean Spresian opened the scoring after just five minutes with Marc Hoenselaars replying for the Tigers on the half hour. Three goals in the space of 13 minutes, late in the second half to Steve Karavatakis (2) and Matthew Borg finally killing off the contest.

Belconnen 2
Parramatta 2

In a game worthy of a final Belconnen Blue Devils and Parramatta Eagles fought out a 2-2 draw in the final round of the NSW Premier League at West Belconnen Sports Ground on Saturday night.

In one of the most entertaining games of the season, both sides were desperate for victory and the match was played at a fast and furious pace with end to end action keeping the crowd on their feet.

Craig Unwin scored both Blue Devils goals in the first half while Balla Conde equalised twice for the Eagles.

Bonnyrigg leave St George shell-shocked

St George	1
Bonnyrigg	3

By Greg Stock

Six weeks ago Bonnyrigg were a club in crisis. A mid-season slump with a string of ordinary results and rumours of player discontent had seemingly overshadowed the club, hell bent on making an impact in the Premier League.

But at St. George Stadium on Saturday night those demons were finally exorcised in one of the most explosive 45 minutes of football seen this season.

Trailing 1-0 at the break, Bonnyrigg had been a tad unlucky. Some good forays forward in the first half had been denied by either poor finishing or the acrobatic talents of St George goalkeeper Stacy Alogdellis.

St. George on the other hand had been patient, limiting their excursions forward to long balls pumped in the general direction of speedster 'Archie' Markopoulos. Their defence was holding and some good scrambling at the back had seen off any Bonnyrigg threat.

But in the second forty five minute their luck ran out. Bonnyrigg were unstoppable. The writing was on the wall in the first minute after the break when Stacy Alogdellis was again called on to deny a Javier Mancino strike from just inside the area.

Photo by Carlos Furtado

Tayfun Devrimol: Bonnyrigg's Champion defender will be a key player in the final series.

But the best was yet to come. With midfielder David Reid and Javier Mancino starting to find their feet, the White Eagles launched attack after attack on the now brittle St. George defence. Their first goal came when Robert Gomez found himself some space in the 10 yard box and put away a nod down by Michael Hawrysiuk, following a good cross from Devrim Huseyin.

Their second from makeshift striker Michael Hawrysiuk was a gift. In his only blemish for the night Alogdellis was unable to hold a Bonnyrigg corner and suceeded in only pushing the ball to the feet of Hawrysiuk.

Lurking on the edge of the six yard box, he made no mistake with his left foot strike. The third goal from Gomez was another piece of Bonnyrigg magic.

Breaking down the right hand touchline, David Reid sent in a cross aimed for Michael Hawrysiuk on the edge of the penalty box. Hawrysiuk had the presence of mind to baulk a strike and see the cross trail behind him to the unmarked Gomez, who let it rip with his right foot.

RESULTS

ROUND 18

St George Saints	1	Bonnyrigg WE	3
(A Markopoulos 39m)		*(R Gomez 50/76m M Hawrysiuk 60m)*	
Penrith Panthers	2	Central Coast Coasties	2
(L Boyd 35m O El Ali 64m)		*(P Preston 48m M Williams 66m)*	
Blacktown City	2	C'bury M'ville	5
(Z Donev 11m B Willard 70m)		*(A Amegashie 14m A Kotsopoulos 18/51m J Kyriazopoulos 19m Y Talcevski 87m)*	
Sutherland Sharks	1	Leichhardt Tigers	4
(D Spresian 5m)		*(M Hoenselaars 32m M Borg 70m S Karavatakis 76/83m)*	

TOP SCORERS

AFTER ROUND 18

Player	Club	Goals
Darren Iocca	Blacktown City Demons	14
Steve Lazzari	Belconnen Blue Devils	14
Robbie Gomez	Bonnyrigg WE	10
Matthew Borg	Leichhardt Tigers	10

NSW PREMIER LEAGUE LADDER

(AFTER ROUND 18)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Blacktown City	**18**	**12**	**3**	**3**	**47**	**28**	**39**
Bonnyrigg	18	10	5	3	45	22	35
Parramatta	18	11	2	5	44	31	35
Canterbury Marrickville	18	8	4	6	34	28	28
Leichhardt	18	8	2	8	41	36	26
St George	18	8	2	8	28	32	26
Belconnen	18	7	4	7	32	31	25
Central Coast	18	7	3	8	21	25	24
Penrith	18	2	4	12	16	43	10
Sutherland	18	0	5	13	12	44	5

For further information see: www.nswpremierleague.com

NSW Premier League

www.nswpremierleague.com

MINOR SEMI-FINAL:
SATURDAY 24th MARCH, LAMBERT PARK

1ST GRADE: Parramatta Eagles v Canterbury-M'ville 5.00pm
UNDER 19: Parramatta Eagles v St George 3.00pm

MAJOR SEMI-FINAL:
SUNDAY 25th MARCH, MELITA STADIUM

1ST GRADE: Blacktown City v Bonnyrigg 5.00pm
UNDER 19: Leichhardt v Blacktown City 3.00pm

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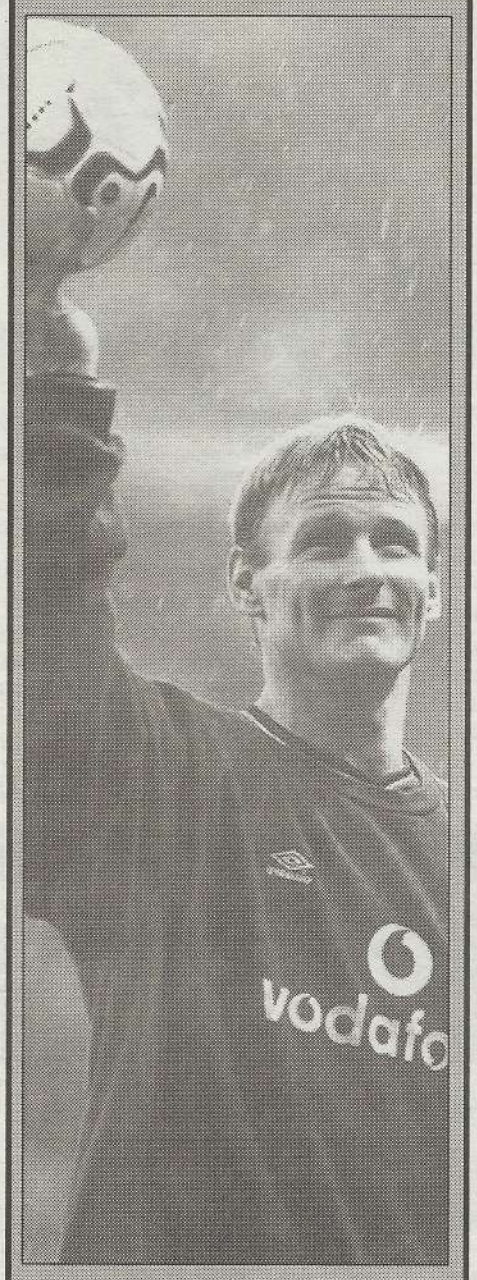
WORLD

EUROPEAN CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

GROUP A



Manchester United's Terry Sheringham celebrates his team's victory over Panathinaikos.

Latest Results

Valencia	2	Panathinaikos	1
Manchester Utd	3	Sturm Graz	0

Final Standings

Valencia	6	3	3	0	10	2	12
Manchester United	6	3	3	0	10	3	12
Sturm Graz	6	2	0	4	4	13	6
Panathinaikos	6	0	2	4	4	10	2

*Valencia and Manchester United qualify for quarter-finals

Previous Results:

Valencia	2	Sturm Graz	0
Manchester Utd	3	Panathinaikos	1
Panathinaikos	0	Valencia	0
Sturm Graz	0	Manchester Utd	2
Sturm Graz	2	Panathinaikos	0
Valencia	0	Manchester Utd	0
Panathinaikos	1	Sturm Graz	2
Manchester Utd	1	Valencia	1
Sturm Graz	0	Valencia	5
Panathinaikos	1	Manchester Utd	1

GROUP B

Latest Results

AC Milan	1	Dep. Coruna	1
PSG	2	Galatasaray	0

Final Standings

Deportivo Coruna	6	3	1	2	10	7	10
Galatasaray	6	3	1	2	6	6	10
AC Milan	6	1	4	1	6	7	7
PSG	6	1	2	3	8	10	5

*Deportivo Coruna and Galatasaray qualify for quarter-finals

Previous Results:

AC Milan	2	Galatasaray	2
PSG	1	Dep. Coruna	3
Deportivo Coruna	0	AC Milan	1
Galatasaray	1	PSG	0
Galatasaray	1	Dep. Coruna	0
AC Milan	1	PSG	1
Deportivo Coruna	2	Galatasaray	0
PSG	1	AC Milan	1
Galatasaray	2	AC Milan	0
Deportivo Coruna	4	PSG	3

Deportivo La Coruna's Djalminha reacts after scoring against AC Milan.

GROUP C

Arsenal's Patrick Vieira holds off the challenge of a Bayern Munich player.

Latest Results

Bayern Munich	1	Arsenal	0
Spartak Moscow	1	Olympique Lyon	1

Final Standings

Bayern Munich	6	4	1	1	8	5	13
Arsenal	6	2	2	2	6	8	8
Olympique Lyon	6	2	2	2	8	4	8
Spartak Moscow	6	1	1	4	5	10	4

*Bayern Munich and Arsenal qualify for quarter-finals

Previous Results:

Bayern Munich	1	Olympique Lyon	0
Spartak Moscow	4	Arsenal	1
Arsenal	2	Bayern Munich	2
Olympique Lyon	3	Spartak Moscow	0
Olympique Lyon	0	Arsenal	1
Bayern Munich	1	Spartak Moscow	0
Arsenal	1	Olympique Lyon	1
Spartak Moscow	0	Bayern Munich	3
Olympique Lyon	3	Bayern Munich	0
Arsenal	1	Spartak Moscow	0

GROUP D

Latest Results

Leeds United	3	Lazio	3
Anderlecht	2	Real Madrid	0

Final Standings

Real Madrid	6	4	1	1	14	9	13
Leeds United	6	3	1	2	12	10	10
Anderlecht	6	2	0	4	7	12	6
Lazio	6	1	2	3	9	11	5

*Read Madrid and Leeds United qualify for quarter-finals

Previous Results:

Leeds United	0	Real Madrid	2
Anderlecht	1	Lazio	0
Lazio	0	Leeds United	1
Real Madrid	4	Anderlecht	1
Real Madrid	3	Lazio	2
Leeds United	2	Anderlecht	1
Lazio	2	Real Madrid	2
Anderlecht	1	Leeds United	4
Real Madrid	3	Leeds United	2
Lazio	2	Anderlecht	1

Quarterfinals: 1st legs: April 3/4
2nd legs: April 17/18
Semifinals: 1st legs: May 1/2
2nd legs: May 8/9
Final:
San Siro, Milan, May 23, 2001

Leeds United defence strongman, Ian Harte celebrating one of his team's goals against Lazio.

Maldini replaces Zaccheroni at Milan

AC Milan coach Alberto Zaccheroni was sacked last week in the wake of his side's exit from the Champions League.

The Serie A club immediately appointed former Italy coach Cesare Maldini, the father of team captain Paolo, as head coach until the end of the season. Youth team coach Mauro Tassotti will assist Maldini.

Milan drew 1-1 with Spain's Deportivo last week, failing to achieve the win they needed to reach the quarter-finals.

The five times European Cup winners are languishing in eighth place in Serie A after a run of just two wins in 18 league and cup matches since mid-December.

Milan vice-president Adriano Galliani told reporters at Milan's luxury training camp that the decision had been taken after he held early morning talks with club president and owner Silvio Berlusconi.

Galliani paid tribute to the work Zaccheroni had done during nearly three seasons with the club.

"We won the league in his first season, we finished third and qualified for the Champions League in his second year. This year was going well until mid-December.

"We qualified well from the first phase of the Champions League ahead of Leeds United and Barcelona. His overall balance is two and a half good years and three bad months," Galliani said.

"I don't think we can be said to have rushed this decision though. But we decided that now is the time we had to make a change," Galliani added.

Galliani said he hoped the appointment of Maldini and Tassotti would inspire the side in the latter stages of the season.

Maldini was captain of the first Milan side to win the European Cup in 1963 while Tassotti skippered the last team to raise the continent's premier trophy in 1994.

Cesare Maldini

Roberto Carlos: Overlooked by Brazil.

Roberto Carlos dumped from Brazil squad

Brazilian coach Emerson Leao named a 23-man squad for the 2002 World Cup qualifier against Ecuador in Quito on March 28 with the notable exception of Real Madrid defender and team stalwart Roberto Carlos.

It was unclear why Carlos had been dropped, but it is likely to provoke speculation that long-time foe Romario, who captained the team to a 3-3 draw with Mexico last week, may have had a hand in the decision.

Romario and Carlos fell out at the 1998 World Cup in France after the striker publicly criticised the defender's performance.

The Mexico friendly was the first time they played on the same side since the World Cup.

Romario, who has fallen out with a long list of players and coaches over the years, had said he was ready to make his peace with Carlos for the good of the team.

Leao also dropped Cafu, and brought in Sao Paulo's Belletti, Sao Caetano's Cesar, and Juninho Pernambucano from Vasco.

Squad:

Goalkeepers: Rogerio (Sao Paulo), Velloso (Atletico Mineiro)

Defenders: Belletti (Sao Paulo), Anderson (Gremio), Silvinho (Arsenal), Cesar (Sao Caetano), Lúcio (Bayern), Roque Junior (Milan), Cris (Cruzeiro), Edmilson (Lyon)

Midfielders: Emerson (Roma), Vampeta (PSG), Ricardinho (Cruzeiro), Juninho Paulista (Vasco), Robert (Santos), Juninho Pernambucano (Vasco)

Forwards: Edilson (Flamengo), Romario (Vasco), Rivaldo (Barcelona), Euller (Vasco), Luizao (Corinthians), Ronaldinho Gaucho (Gremio).

NIGERIAN FAN COMMITS SUICIDE

A Nigerian man killed himself over the National team's 0-0 draw with Ghana in a World Cup qualifying match last weekend, the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reported.

The middle-aged man told witnesses he would take his own life if Nigeria failed to win the match played in Accra. The incident happened in the southern town of Umuahia.

"When he said it, we thought he was joking. But surprisingly, immediately after the match he took out a small bottle from his pocket and drank the contents," the news agency quoted eyewitness Joyce Onwuka as saying.

"It was when he started foaming in the mouth a few minutes after and subsequently died that we realised it was not a joke."

On Tuesday, the Nigerian Soccer authorities apologised for the result of the match following a barrage of public criticism.

Nigeria are currently third in their group behind Sudan and Liberia. Sierra Leone complete the five-team group from which only one will qualify for the 2002 World Cup finals in Japan and South Korea.

RAUL'S UEFA BAN LIFTED

Real Madrid striker Raul's one-match ban and 20,000 Swiss francs ($11,860) fine for a handball goal against Leeds United was lifted by UEFA's appeals body last week.

Raul had been punished after apparently using his hand to score his side's first goal in the 3-2 Champions League win over Leeds on March 6.

UEFA said their rules stated that the disciplinary body could only act in such a case if the referee had been unable to make a factual decision during the game.

Because referee Ryszard Wojcik said he had followed the play and decided Raul had used his head to score -- thus making a "factual decision" -- the European governing body said the sanction could not stand, regardless of whether the referee's decision was correct.

"The factual decision taken by the referee has to be accepted, even if it is wrong," UEFA said.

"The appeal must therefore be upheld."

Real Madrid's sporting director Jorge Valdano, who had called the original decision to sanction Raul a stain on the player's "impeccable" character, said he was satisfied with the result of the appeal.

"This decision safeguards the name of an emblematic player for Real Madrid and for football in general," Valdano said from the club's base.

Barcelona's Abelardo injured

Barcelona defender Abelardo could miss the remainder of Spain's World Cup qualifying campaign after the club revealed he will be out for up to six months.

The Catalan club originally said the 31-year-old centre-back could be playing again within eight to 12 weeks but they revised their estimate after the player underwent arthroscopic surgery last week.

Dr Ramon Cugat said the recovery time for such an injury was between four and six months but added that in this case it would

likely be at the high end of the range.

"He wasn't worried but like all players he wanted to know if he would return to playing and we assured him he would," Cugat said.

Abelardo will miss Barcelona's push for success in the Spanish league, King's Cup and UEFA Cup, as well as Spain's World Cup qualifiers against Liechtenstein on March 24, Bosnia on June 2 and Israel four days later.

He will also be doubtful for Spain's final two group seven matches against Austria and Liechtenstein on September 1 and 5 respectively.

Bayern coach boasts of Euro glory

Bayern Munich coach Ottmar Hitzfeld said his team's 1-0 win over Arsenal to head Champions League group C showed the German champions can beat any of Europe's top clubs.

"We belong now to the best eight teams in Europe. Now we take it as it comes. We can beat anyone at the top level," Hitzfeld said.

Bayern were eager to avenge a 3-0 drubbing last week by Olympique Lyon and Hitzfeld said he thought his tactical approach in the Arsenal game had paid dividends.

The win helped Bayern shake off the Lyon defeat, which Hitzfeld said was a great boost going into the last eight of the competition.

"We slipped up against Lyon but it proved a good lesson for us. I think we left the other three teams in the group standing and this gives us a big boost going into the quarter-finals," Hitzfeld said.

"We were well organised and we played forward well from a compact defence. We were more dangerous than Arsenal and of course the early goal helped us. We controlled Arsenal well."

Despite losing to the German champions, the Londoners also qualified for the quarter-finals as group runners-up.

But Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger said his team performed poorly. "It was one of our weakest games in the Champions League. We could not change our pace, we couldn't create chances," he said.

IT'S SPAIN V ENGLAND IN CHAMPIONS LEAGUE PAIRINGS

Reigning European champions Real Madrid said they were satisfied with being drawn to face Galatasaray in the Champions League quarter-finals.

The draw gives Real a chance to avenge their defeat against the UEFA Cup holders in this season's European Super Cup.

The Turkish side ran out 2-1 winners in the Super Cup courtesy of two goals by Brazilian Jardel.

Similarly, English champions, Manchester United will face theirOld foes, Bayern Munich, while Arsenal are to tangle with Spanish giants Valencia, with the last English side left, Leeeds United paired with Deportivo La Coruna.

Coruna coach Javier Irureta was also happy with the draw which sees his team play English side Leeds United.

But Valencia's Hector Cuper made it clear he felt his club faced the toughest of all possible opponents after being paired with England's Arsenal.

"Although there are no easy rivals at this stage in the competition, given our other potential opponents, the truth is I think we have got a good draw," Real Madrid defender Roberto Carlos told reporters.

Deportivo's Irureta said his hopes had been realised with the draw against Leeds. "Leeds were the rivals I said I would have preferred, but I know it won't be easy.

The least satisfied of the Spanish coaches was Valencia's Cuper who believes Arsenal will provide a really hard test.

"Of all the teams we could have drawn Arsenal are the toughest. Apart from playing well as a team they have some very talented individual players."

WORLD

RUSSO WRITES

By Joe Russo

It finally happened. AC Milan have sacked Alberto Zaccheroni, the coach club President, Silvio Berlusconi, didn't like from day one.

Zaccheroni was lured to Milan after a brilliant few years at Udinese but things started to turn sour shortly after he arrived.

However, in his first year at Milan he brought the club a most unexpected League Title (Scudetto). He soon became popular with the fans and was always a media favourite.

Given Zaccheroni's level of popularity, Berlusconi soon found himself in a difficult position - he couldn't get rid of a popular coach.

Nearly three years into Zaccheroni's reign at Milan, Berlusconi finally won in the end. The club's failure in the Champions League was the final straw. The 1-1 draw with Deportivo La Coruna last week guaranteed their elimination from the Champions League.

The replacements for Zaccheroni are somewhat interesting. Cesare Maldini, father of Paolo and former Italian coach, along with Mauro Tassotti, long serving stalwart of the club and also a former defender for Italy.

Maldini is no stranger to the coaching circles but in the Serie A his experience is

somewhat limited. At 69 years young, he is hardly someone that Milan can pin their future hopes on.

When he was coach of the Italian Under 21 team he enjoyed tremendous success but as the senior national coach, his record wasn't as good. He has always been 'associated' with Milan even dating back to his own brilliant playing days.

His offsider Tassotti has absolutely no coaching experience. He was a tough defender who played all his life with the club and could possibly be seen as a

future coach who needs to serve an 'apprenticeship' under Maldini.

Their contract ends in June so it really is only a temporary appointment at this stage.

Earlier in the year it seemed certain that Fatih Terim, who recently departed Fiorentina as coach, would replace Zaccheroni at Milan next year.

However, in recent times it seems that the move from the Turk to Milan may not be as certain as first seemed. It will all be decided at the end of the season.

●●●●

What is going on at Roma? They seem almost certain to win the League Title (Scudetto) but they seem to have an 'identity crisis' when it comes to signing strikers.

They currently have the world's best, Gabriel Batistuta, on the injured list and his replacement is none other than Vincenzo Montella. Montella has played so well, and scored so regularly, that he will be extremely hard to leave him out once Batistuta is back.

The other day Roma signed Antonio Cassano, the promising 18 year-old star from Bari, on a long-term contract lasting until 2006. They also have Marco Delvecchio on their books and in just behind the strikers there is none other than Francesco Totti, arguably the best Italian player currently in Italy.

Delvecchio and Montella have both played for Italy, so add in Cassano and not forgetting Batistuta, then one comes to realise that Roma seem to be very well off when it comes to strikers.

However, coach Fabio Capello, seems to think otherwise. It is interesting to see that last week he made a 'personal plea' to Salva Ballesta to sign with the club.

Who you may ask?

Ballesta currently plays in Spain's Second Division with Atletico Madrid and is 25 years old. Capello is reportedly very keen to secure his services because there is even talk about a possible move to the Olympic Stadium in September.

The only problem for Capello with Ballesta is that he is very keen to remain in Spain, and in particular Madrid, therefore it seems unlikely he will change his mind and go to Roma.

One wonders why Roma is even bothering about him in the first place! Besides Ballesta, there is also another striker linked to Roma and it is none other than Mark Viduka. Reports have Viduka linked to Roma for a staggering $A45 million.

Furthermore, Viduka is reported as saying that his dream is to play in Italy but why Roma, with all the competition, is hard to understand. It will be interesting to see what unfolds in the long run with all this 'striker talk'.

ITALIAN SERIE A

FIORENTINA 1 BOLOGNA 1

Fiorentina drew their league-high 11th match of the season.

But it was Bologna who opened the scoring after 13 minutes as Giacomo Cipriani headed home a cross from Brazilian Lima.

Yugoslav international Predrag Mijatovic then came off the bench to equalise in the 54th minute as he knocked home a rebound from close range.

LECCE 1 MILAN 2

Alvaro Recoba scored twice to give Inter Milan their fourth away win of the season.

The Uruguayan international opened the scoring in the 28th minute as he beat the off-side trap, dribbled past Lecce goalkeeper Antonio Chimenti and deposited the ball into an unguarded net. Lecce's Luigi Piangerelli equalised two minutes after the break, volleying home a blast from well inside the box.

Recoba saved his heroics for last as he struck a free kick in the 59th minute that caught Chimenti napping. With the win, Inter Milan moved fifth.

Lecce's midfielder Gaetano Vasari (right) is tackled by Inter's Stephane Dalmat.

AC MILAN 4 BARI 0

AC Milan won their first league match under new manager Cesare Maldini. Defender Francesco Coco opened the scoring after eight minutes, heading home a free kick from Demetrio Albertini.

Andriy Shevchenko scored twice to increase his league-leading total to 17 for the season and Serginho added another to cap off a fine performance.

Bari stayed bottom after their 15th defeat in 23 games.

VERONA 1 VICENZA 0

Emiliano Bonazzoli scored his seventh goal of the season to give Verona their sixth league win of the year.

Vicenza slipped to fifth from bottom after their eighth away defeat.

NAPOLI 0 PERUGIA 0

Lowly Napoli were held to a goalless home stalemate by mid-table Perugia.

LAZIO 4 JUVENTUS 1

The Juventus five-game winning streak ended as Pavel Nedved and Hernan Crespo scored twice each to give Lazio victory.

Nedved opened the scoring in the 23rd minute and Hernan Crespo increased the lead one minute after the break.

Juventus were down to 10 men after 58th minutes when Edgar Davids was sent off. Alessandro Del Piero managed to pull one back for Juventus one minute later with a brilliant curling kick from just inside the box.

Nedved added his second in the 65th minute before Crespo secured Lazio's victory with his 16th strike of the season nine minutes from time.

Juventus striker Alessandro Del Piero (left) is tackled by Lazio defender Paolo Negro.

REGGINA 0 AS ROMA 0

Leaders AS Roma saw their seven-game winning run end at lowly Reggina. Both sides went close several times.

Roma remained top, seven points in front of second-placed Juventus and nine ahead of Lazio.

Reggina stayed second from bottom.

UDINESE 1 PARMA 3

Udinese lost their fourth consecutive match. Marco Di Vaio scored his fifth goal in two matches as he put Parma in the lead with a volley after 12 minutes.

Italy midfielder Stefano Fiore equalised from the penalty spot in the 56th minute to provide temporary relief for Udinese manager Luigi Di Canio.

Ex-Udinese striker Marcio Amoroso put Parma back in front three minutes later with a penalty of his own and added an insurance goal nine minutes from time.

Fiorentina	1	Bologna	1
Lecce	1	Inter Milan	2
AC Milan	4	Bari	0
Udinese	1	Parma	3
Verona	1	Vicenza	0
Napoli	0	Perugia	0
Lazio	4	Juventus	1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. AS Roma	**23**	**17**	**4**	**2**	**44**	**17**	**55**
2. Juventus	23	14	6	3	40	19	48
3. Lazio	23	14	4	5	44	26	46
4. Parma	23	11	6	6	38	21	39
5. Inter Milan	23	9	7	7	29	26	34
6. Atalanta Bergamo	22	8	9	5	25	19	33
7. AC Milan	23	8	9	6	37	35	33
8. Bologna	23	9	5	9	29	29	32
9. Perugia	23	8	7	8	28	30	31
10. Lecce	23	7	8	8	29	35	29
11. Fiorentina	23	6	11	6	37	33	29
12. Udinese	23	9	1	13	36	40	28
13. Verona	23	6	6	11	28	41	24
14. Vicenza	23	6	5	12	22	34	23
15. Napoli	23	5	7	11	23	35	22
16. Brescia	22	4	9	9	25	32	21
17. Reggina	23	5	4	14	17	36	19
18. Bari	23	4	4	15	18	41	16

WORLD

ENGLISH PREMIERSHIP

CHARLTON 1 LEEDS UTD 2

Australian Mark Viduka fired Leeds ahead at The Valley after 12 seconds but South Africa striker Shaun Bartlett headed Charlton level in the 18th minute when he beat Leeds goalkeeper Nigel Martyn to a long ball.

Alan Smith scored the winner in the first minute of the second half after a fine run by Harry Kewell. Leeds move up to fifth.

BRADFORD 2 MAN. CITY 2

Dutchman Gerard Wiekens fired City ahead from close range in the 22nd minute after a free-kick panicked the Bradford defence.

Robbe Blake's run and shot pulled the bottom side level seven minutes into the second half and Ashley Ward put Bradford ahead after 57 minutes. Shaun Goater's low finish with 20 minutes remaining ensured third-from-bottom Manchester City averted a damaging loss.

CHELSEA 2 SUNDERLAND 4

Sunderland produced the result of the day thanks to two-goal Don Hutchison.

Marcel Desailly headed home Eidur Gudjohnsen's cross to put Chelsea ahead after 15 minutes.

Sunderland deservedly levelled when Hutchison swivelled to volley a 28th-minute equaliser but Gudjohnsen (38) drove Chelsea back in front. Six minutes after the break Hutchison made it 2-2 with an angled header, Gavin McCann made it 3-2 with a low shot and Sunderland's Kevin Phillips scrambled home the fourth after Carlo Cudicini's error in the Chelsea goal. Sunderland jumped to fourth.

MAN. UTD 2 LEICESTER 0

Lacklustre United rested David Beckham and lost goalkeeper Fabien Barthez to injury in the pre-match warm-up.

Leicester defended well but cracked two minutes from time when Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's shot veered off team mate Dwight Yorke and into the net. Frenchman Mikael Silvestre drove in his first goal for the club in the last minute. United need only another 11 points to seal their third successive league title.

NEWCASTLE 1 M'BROUGH 2

Croatian Alen Boksic broke an eight-game goal drought with two goals in five minutes in the first half, the second a screaming free-kick after 33 minutes, to put Middlesbrough in control against the run of play in the north-east derby.

After Phil Stamp was sent off, Carl Cort pulled a goal back for Newcastle on the hour and Nolberto Solano missed a penalty but Terry Venables's side held on for their first win in nine games to move four points clear of the drop zone.

S'HAMPTON 1 EVERTON 0

Glenn Hoddle's Southampton kept their 10th clean sheet in 12 games and Jo Tessem's 58th-minute effort, squeezed over the line, gave them three points which lifted them to eighth in the table.

Manchester United striker, Ole Gunnar Solskjaer attempts an overhead kick during his team's 2-0 win over Leicester City.

Hoddle, favourite to replace George Graham at Tottenham, refused to comment on the Spurs job afterwards and is expected to go on holiday this week.

LIVERPOOL 1 DERBY COUNTY 1

Jamaica striker Deon Burton gave Derby a shock ninth-minute lead at Anfield following a corner.

Liverpool, with Robbie Fowler and Steven Gerrard on the bench, looked sluggish though and seldom threatened in the first half.

England striker Michael Owen, bidding to impress the watching Eriksson, was their liveliest player and it was no surprise when he equalised after 52 minutes at the second attempt from a Jari Litmanen cross.

Owen went close to snatching a winner several times for Liverpool as they dominated the second period, though goalkeeper Sander Westerveld had to be alert to deny Derby's Thordur Gudjonsson late on.

TOTTENHAM 3 COVENTRY 0

Spurs made light of the turmoil caused by Graham's shock sacking on Friday.

Steffen Iversen headed them in front from a corner after 29 minutes, Les Ferdinand doubled Spurs' advantage following a disputed free-kick five minutes later and Ukrainian Serhiy Rebrov made it 3-0 with an impudent third on the hour.

Second-bottom Coventry are now seven points from safety.

WEST HAM 0 IPSWICH 1

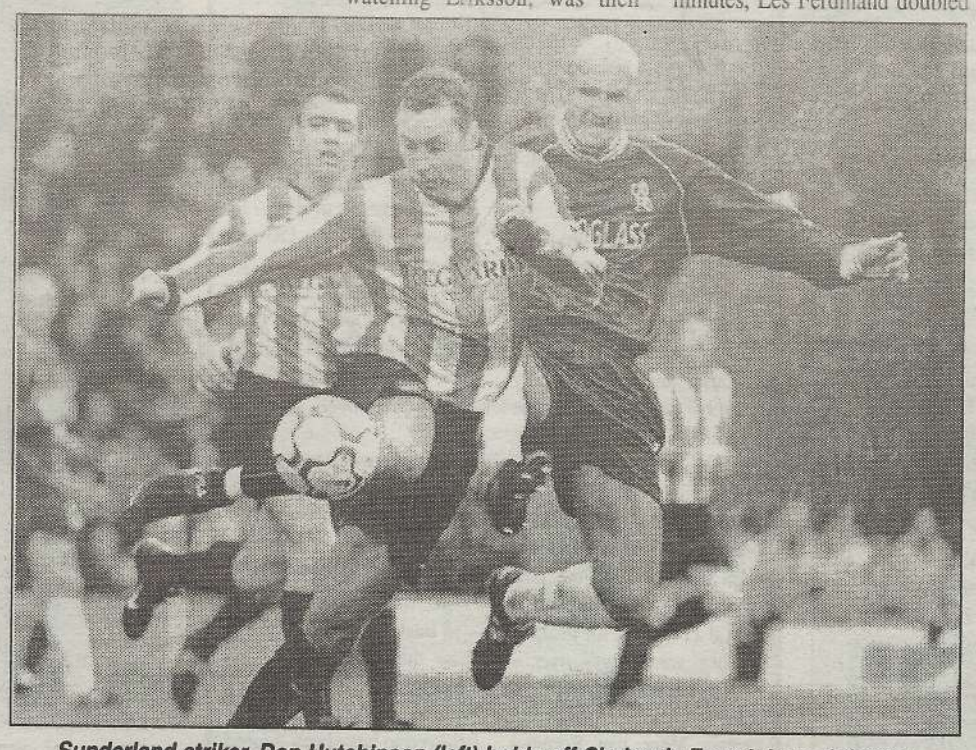
Dutchman Martijn Reuser curled home a free-kick on the hour to give Ipswich three points which ensured they stay a point clear of Sunderland in third.

West Ham, 14th with 35 points, will be looking anxiously at the clubs below them.

ASTON VILLA 0 ARSENAL 0

Arsene Wenger's side had the better of a dull game at Villa Park and Frenchman Gilles Grimandi squandered their clearest chance when he lobbed the ball weakly into Villa goalkeeper David James's hands from eight metres in the 86th minute.

Grimandi was then sent off in stoppage time for a second yellow card and will now miss the FA Cup semi-final against local rivals Arsenal on April 8 through suspension.



Sunderland striker, Don Hutchinson (left) holds off Chelsea's French born defender, Frank Lebeouf during their clash at Stamford Bridge.

Aston Villa	0	Arsenal	0
Liverpool	1	Derby County	1
Bradford City	2	Manchester City	2
Charlton Athletic	1	Leeds United	2
Chelsea	2	Sunderland	4
Manchester United	2	Leicester City	0
Newcastle United	1	Middlesbrough	2
Southampton	1	Everton	0
Tottenham Hotspur	3	Coventry City	0
West Ham United	0	Ipswich Town	1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Manchester United	30	21	7	2	68	19	70
2. Arsenal	30	15	9	6	47	29	54
3. Ipswich Town	30	15	4	11	44	36	49
4. Sunderland	30	13	9	8	37	30	48
5. Leeds United	30	13	8	9	44	38	47
6. Liverpool	28	13	7	8	48	31	46
7. Leicester City	29	13	6	10	31	31	45
8. Southampton	29	12	8	9	34	34	44
9. Chelsea	29	11	9	9	52	37	42
10. Charlton Athletic	30	11	9	10	39	42	42
11. Tottenham Hotspur	30	10	9	11	36	38	39
12. Aston Villa	29	9	11	9	31	30	38
13. Newcastle United	29	11	5	13	34	41	38
14. West Ham United	30	8	11	11	35	38	35
15. Derby County	30	8	11	11	31	45	35
16. Everton	30	8	8	14	31	44	32
17. Middlesbrough	30	6	13	11	33	36	31
18. Manchester City	30	6	9	15	33	49	27
19. Coventry City	30	5	9	16	26	51	24

Apology

Dear Readers,

Your regular column, Murphy's Law is unavoidably absent this week due to unforeseen circumstances.

It will however return as usual next week.

FIFA World Rankings

(Valid until April 11)

1	Brazil	814	70	Burkina Faso	494	139	St Kitts & Nevis	277
2	France	797	71	Macedonia FYR	492	140	St Lucia	275
3	Argentina	771	72=	Congo DR	488	141	Korea DPR	267
4	Portugal	738	72=	Uzbekistan	488	142	Luxemburg	265
5	Italy	735	74	Bosnia-Her	487	143	Bangladesh	262
6	Czech Republic	734	75=	Albania	476	144	Tanzania	260
7	Spain	727	75=	**AUSTRALIA**	476	145	Ant and Barbuda	248
8	Paraguay	703	77	China PR	475	146	Andorra	245
9	Netherlands	702	78	Liberia	474	147	Benin	243
10	Yugoslavia	701	79	Guinea	473	148	Grenada	242
11	Germany	698	80	Cuba	471	149	Liechtenstein	240
12	Mexico	684	81	Algeria	470	150	Botswana	232
13	Romania	680	82	Iraq	469	151	Sri Lanka	226
14	Norway	670	83	Togo	468	152	Dominican Rep	
15	Colombia	667	84	Senegal	461	153	Dominica	220
16	England	659	85	El Salvador	459	154	Bermuda	217
17	Croatia	656	85	Qatar	459	155	Maldives	216
18	United States	655	87	Namibia	458	156	Gambia	214
19	Russia	639	88	Haiti	456	157	Cape Verde Is	209
20	South Africa	631	89	Lithuania	453	158	Eritrea	196
21	Sweden	629	90	Congo	451	159	Palestine	194
22	Chile	623	91	Latvia	449	160	Cayman Islands	193
23	Slovakia	620	92	New Zealand	446	161=	Kyrgyzstan	188
24	Denmark	619	93	Armenia	440	161=	Yemen	188
25	Saudi Arabia	617	94	Gabon	438	163	Mauritania	187
26	Belgium	615	95	Vietnam SR	437	164	Chinese Taipei	185
27	Tunisia	612	96	Northern Ireland	433	165=	Chad	173
28	Scotland	606	97	Moldova	426	166	Surinam	172
29	Turkey	605	98	Indonesia	425	167	Laos	170
30	Morocco	602	99	Belarus	423	168	San Marino	167
31	Trin & Tobago	597	100	Mali	420	169	British Virgin Is.	166
32	Poland	595	101	Oman	413	170	Nepal	165
33	Egypt	594	102=	Singapore	411	171	Vanuatu	163
33	Uruguay	594	102=	Syria	411	172	Cambodia	157
35	Ireland Republic	590	104	Uganda	408	173	Cook Islands	156
36	Cameroon	587	105	Jordan	407	174	Samoa	139
37	Iran	586	106	Kenya	406	175	Netherlands Ant	133
38	Ukraine	584	107	Barbados	404	176	Cent African Rep.	127
39	Korea Republic	582	108	Malaysia	400	177	Guinea-Bissau	125
40	Slovenia	581	109	Wales	383	178	Bahamas	116
41	Israel	576	110	Lebanon	382	179=	Macao	115
42	Japan	575	111	Venezuela	375	179=	Philippines	115
43	Jamaica	570	112	Madagascar		179=	Sao Tome e Principe	115
44	Greece	568	113	Malawi	362	182	Niger	106
45	Austria	567	114	Bahrain	360	183	Guyana	104
46	Cote d' Ivoire	564	115=	Libya	359	184	Aruba	100
47	Hungary	560	115=	Mozambique	340	185	Tonga	98
48	Peru	555	117	Azerbaijan	346	186	Belize	92
49	Bulgaria	553	118	Mauritius	342	187	Equatorial Guinea	90
49	Honduras	553	119	Faroe Islands	332	188	Mongolia	89
51	Zambia	552	120	Sudan	327	189	Seycheiles	83
52	Nigeria	545	121	Malta	322	190	Djibouti	79
53	Ecuador	543	122	Kazakhstan	321	191	Pakistan	72
54=	Angola	541	123	Panama	316	192	Nicaragua	71
54=	Iceland	541	124	India	312	193	PNG	65
56	Costa Rica	539	125	Hong Kong	308	194	Darussalam	64
57	Finland	535	126	Myanmar	306	195	Puerto Rico	63
58	Guatemala	529	127	Burundi	305	196	Somalia	59
59	Ghana	526	128	Swaziland	304	197	Anguilla	58
60	Switzerland	525	129	Turkmenistan	303	198	US Virgin Islands	33
61	Thailand	521	130	St Vincent/Gr	300	199	Guam	29
62	Cyprus	516	131	Rwanda	298	200	Turks and Caicos Islands	22
63	Canada	511	132	Lesotho	290	201	Bhutan	15
64	UAE	507	133	Fiji	289	202	Montserrat	11
65	Zimbabwe	506	134=	Sierra Leone	288	203	American Samoa	8
66=	Bolivia	503	134=	Solomon Is.	288			
66=	Georgia	503	136	Tahiti	286			
66=	Kuwait	503	137	Ethiopia	280			
69	Estonia	502	138	Tajikistan	279			

***Note:** Teams inactive since 1991 and teams which have not played yet do not appear in the table.*

UEFA CUP Q-FINALS

Rivaldo squeezes out Celta Vigo

Barcelona defender, Michael Reiziger leaps over Celta Vigo's Giovanella during their UEFA Cup clash.

Barcelona edged through to the semifinals of the UEFA Cup on away goals last week as their 3-2 defeat in the second leg against Celta Vigo left the overall result of the all-Spanish clash 4-4.

Barcelona, leading 2-1 from the quarter-final first leg, extended their overall lead on 29 minutes as Rivaldo struck from the edge of the box following a breakaway led by Marc Overmars.

Catanha equalised five minutes later with his own long-range strike after a neat pass from Alexander Mostovoi but Rivaldo got a crucial second away goal for his side a minute before half-time with a free kick from close to 30 metres.

That left Celta 4-2 down and needing to score three times in the second half to go through.

They got one back with a Gustavo Lopez penalty on 64 minnutes and sparked hopes of a a dramatic comeback as Mostovoi struck two minutes into injury time.

There was scarcely time for Barcelona to kick off again, though, and they breathed a sigh of relief as they squeezed through.

CRYUFF STEERS ALAVES INTO HISTORIC SEMIS

A first-half strike by Jordi Cruyff helped Basque side Alaves into the UEFA Cup semifinals in their debut season in Europe.

They lost 2-1 away to Rayo Vallecano on Thursday -- Alaves's first in the competition -- but won their quarter-final tie 4-2 on aggregate.

Cruyff's angled shot in the 19th minute followed some good work by Romanian international Cosmin Contra and effectively extinguished Rayo's faint hopes of staging a comeback after their comprehensive 3-0 defeat in Vitoria last week.

Rayo equalised four minutes before the break with a well-taken strike by Jose Maria Quevedo and went ahead with a Luis Cembranos penalty after 79 minutes.

But their fightback came too late and the win was scant consolation for the Madrid-based side, also playing in Europe for the first time this season.

Liverpool edge past Porto

Goals from Danny Murphy and Michael Owen helped Liverpool book a place in the UEFA Cup semifinals last week with a 2-0 second-leg win over Porto.

Liverpool earned the victory after holding the northern Portuguese side to a 0-0 draw in the first leg last week.

Murphy was lucky not to be penalised for handball as he controlled Steve Gerrard's cross before rolling a shot under Porto goalkeeper Pedro Esphina for the opener in the 33rd minute.

And Espinha looked at fault when he was slow to move to stop Michael Owen's downward header from bouncing into the roof of the net from another Gerrard centre five minutes later.

Fans revolt as Kaisers dump PSV

Irate fans broke through a gate and forced the referee to halt the UEFA Cup quarter-final second leg between PSV Eindhoven and Kaiserslautern for 15 minutes.

Kaiserslautern eventually won 1-0 to qualify for the semifinals 2-0 on aggregate.

Spanish referee Antonio Lopez Nieto halted play 16 minutes from time while PSV coach Erik Gerets and his team tried to calm the fans who had broken through a gate at a corner of the ground.

They were angry over a penalty awarded against their team and a red card shown to captain Mark van Bommel for a second bookable offence.

Mario Basler had converted the penalty in the 71st minute to give the German club a 1-0 lead.

Matchwinner Basler said the crowd trouble had been "pretty frightening". But he denied that his actions after scoring had been provocative.

He had cupped his hand to his ear as if straining to hear after the home fans had whistled loudly as he was taking the spot kick.

"It wasn't provocative," said Basler. "I just wanted to show them it hadn't put me off at all."

A policewoman is believed to have been injured during the the crowd trouble.

Liverpool manager, Gerard Houllier (right) instructs top striker, Emile Heskey during the game against Porto.

WORLD

WORLD RESULTS ... WORLD RESULTS ...

FRENCH CHAMPIONNAT

LILLE, NANTES IN NECK-TO-NECK

Lille and Nantes continued their joust at the top of the French First Division on Saturday, both scoring emphatic wins to remain tied for the lead with five rounds remaining.

Australian striker Mile Sterjovski scored after eight minutes and Johnny Ecker added a second goal in second half injury time as Lille won 2-0 away at Toulouse, while Nantes triumphed 4-1 at home to Sedan.

Lille and Nantes both have 53 points from 29 games with Lille still holding the edge on goal difference.

Olympique Lyon moved up to third ahead of Sedan after a 3-0 win at AJ Auxerre but they remain four points off the pace.

Lille scored their first win in Toulouse in 17 visits dating back to 1957.

Dagui Bakari set up the opener for Sterjovski, escaping his marker on the left and sending in a cross that the Australian volleyed into the net from inside the penalty area.

Defender Ecker's late goal came from a freekick that cannoned in the net off the defensive wall.

Nantes, who are chasing a domestic treble, took an early lead against Sedan through an Eddy Capron own goal but the visitors hit back through Pius N'Diefi after the break.

Nantes then took complete control with goals from leading scorer Viorel Moldovan and Olivier Monterrubio, after a one-two with Moldovan.

Salomon Olembe netted a late fourth goal for Nantes before Sedan had Cedric Elzeard sent off seconds before the final whistle.

Hervu Alicarte of Toulouse (right) tackles Sylvain N'Diaye of Lille.

Brazilian striker Sonny Anderson scored Lyon's opening two goals at Auxerre — the second from the penalty spot — to take his league tally to 16 this season. Sidney Govou netted the third Lyon goal with seven minutes remaining.

In other matches, Stade Rennes won 6-1 away at En Avant Guingamp in an action-packed Brittany derby, Monaco beat Troyes 4-3 and St Etienne boosted their hopes of avoiding relegation with a 2-1 win at home to Bastia.

Olympique Marseille were held to a 0-0 draw by bottom club Strasbourg while RC Lens drew 1-1 at home to Metz and have now gone 10 games without a victory.

Girondins Bordeaux 2 Paris St Germain 0, Toulouse 0 Lille 2, Nantes 4 Sedan 1, AJ Auxerre 0 Olympique Lyon 3, Monaco 4 Troyes 3, En Avant Guingamp 1 Stade Rennes 6, St Etienne 2 Bastia 1, Olympique Marseille 0 Strasbourg 0, RC Lens 1 Metz 1.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Lille	29	15	8	6	35	19	53
2. Nantes	29	16	5	8	49	34	53
3. O. Lyon	29	12	13	4	42	25	49
4. G. Bordeaux	29	13	10	6	40	25	49
5. Sedan	29	13	8	8	39	31	47
6. Stade Rennes	29	12	6	11	39	31	42
7. Troyes	29	11	9	9	42	43	42
8. Guingamp	29	11	8	10	34	38	41
9. AJ Auxerre	29	11	7	11	30	34	40
10. Bastia	29	11	6	12	36	34	39
11. Monaco	29	11	5	13	45	42	38
12. PSG	29	10	6	13	36	39	36
13. RC Lens	29	8	10	11	31	32	34
14. O. Marseille	29	9	6	14	26	34	33
15. Metz	28	7	10	11	28	39	31
16. St Etienne	29	9	7	13	37	47	27
17. Toulouse	29	5	10	14	26	41	25
18. Strasbourg	28	5	8	15	24	51	23

GERMAN BUNDESLIGA

BAYERN GO CLEAR

Borussia Dortmund midfielder, Lars Ricken (left) stops a Leverkusen player.

German champions Bayern Munich overcame city rivals TSV 1860 Munich 2-0 on Saturday to move three points clear at the top of the Bundesliga standings.

Second-half goals from Brazilians Elber and Paulo Sergio enabled Bayern to win what turned out to be an exciting derby.

Victory put them on 49 points, three ahead of Bayer Leverkusen who moved up to second place with a 3-1 win at title-chasing rivals Borussia Dortmund, now third a further point adrift.

Watched by 69,000 fans in a packed Olympic stadium, the match was a keenly contested affair with several opportunities falling to both sides until Elber struck from close range in the 48th minute.

Paulo Sergio put the issue beyond doubt from a counter-attack 10 minutes from time.

"A derby is a great occasion for the fans and I think this game did not disappoint them," Bayern coach Ottmar Hitzfeld said. It took us time to get into the match but we played really well overall."

Elsewhere, Leverkusen scored twice in the opening 10 minutes on their way to a hard-earned victory in Dortmund.

The visitors opened the scoring after seven minutes when midfielder Bernd Schneider struck from 45 metres, surprising Dortmund goalkeeper Jens Lehmann on the edge of the penalty area.

Striker Ulf Kirsten then exploited a blunder from Dortmund defender Christian Woerns to make it 2-0 from close range.

Woerns made amends by reducing the arrears with a header in the 15th minute. Dortmund kept pushing after that but despite tremendous support from a capacity crowd of over 68,000, they never came back.

Leverkusen stayed in control even after Germany midfielder Michael Ballack was sent off with 15 minutes to go and increased their lead through substitute Thomas Brdaric in stoppage time.

Dortmund coach Matthias Sammer said his men deserved at least a point.

"We started slowly and gave away two goals from stupid mistakes but after that we fought well," he said. "A draw would have been a fair result."

Werder Bremen 1 Kaiserslautern 2, SpVgg Unterhaching 0 VfB Stuttgart 0, TSV 1860 Munich 0 Bayern Munich 2, Borussia Dortmund 1 Bayer Leverkusen 3, Schalke 04 0 SC Freiburg 0, Hansa Rostock 2 VfL Bochum 0, Energie Cottbus 3 Hertha Berlin 0, Eintracht Frankfurt 1 Hamburg SV 1, Cologne 0 VfL Wolfsburg 0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Bayern Munich	26	15	4	7	51	28	49
2. B. Leverkusen	26	14	4	8	46	30	46
3. Kaiserslautern	26	14	4	8	39	33	46
4. B. Dortmund	26	13	6	7	44	34	45
5. Schalke 04	26	12	7	7	43	26	43
6. Hertha Berlin	26	14	1	11	47	44	43
7. Cologne	26	10	7	9	44	39	37
8. Werder Bremen	26	10	7	9	36	38	37
9. VfL Wolfsburg	26	9	9	8	49	34	36
10. SC Freiburg	26	9	9	8	33	29	36
11. 1860 Munich	26	9	7	10	33	42	34
12. Hansa Rostock	26	10	4	12	27	37	34
13. Hamburg SV	26	9	5	12	49	48	32
14. E. Cottbus	26	9	2	15	32	43	29
15. E. Frankfurt	26	8	5	13	31	47	29
16. Unterhaching	26	7	7	12	25	44	28
17. VfB Stuttgart	26	6	9	11	35	40	27
18. VfL Bochum	26	5	5	16	22	50	20

PRIMERA LIGA

MADRID, CORUNA LOSE

Real Madrid missed the chance to take a significant step towards the Spanish league title as they went down 1-0 at Real Mallorca last week.

Deportivo La Coruna's 2-0 defeat to Las Palmas on Saturday had opened the door for Vicente del Bosque's side to go eight points clear at the top of the table.

Real Madrid created two decent chances in the opening 15 minutes as they looked to avenge the 2-0 defeat they suffered by Mallorca at the Bernabeu in November.

However, Mallorca gradually took control of the game, chasing down the visitors relentlessly and looking to set free their two speedy forwards Samuel Etoo and Alberto Luque.

The only goal arrived after 39 minutes when Miquel Soler swung in a cross from the right touchline and Luque headed down and in past Iker Casillas.

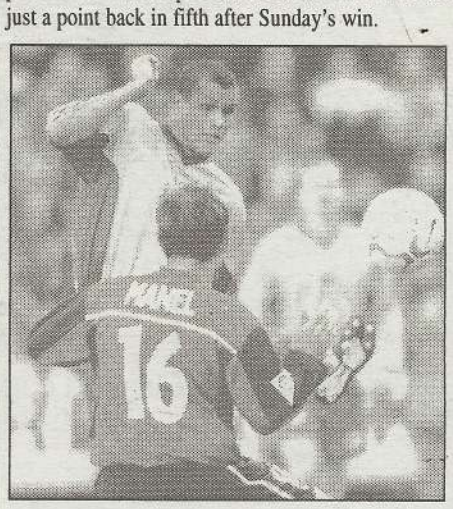
Del Bosque's side never found their rhythm in the second half and Etoo might have increased the margin of victory as he twice came close late on.

Real Madrid still lead the standings on 56 points buut are closely followed by Deportivo, five points adrift.

Barcelona also had a disappointing day. They were held to a 1-1 draw at Numancia after leading through a Patrick Kluviert goal in the first half.

Ruben Navarro's equaliser left Barcelona in fourth place on still 10 behind Madrid with 11 games to play.

Barcelona's hold on the fourth Champions League place is now under pressure from Mallorca who are just a point back in fifth after Sunday's win.



Barcelona's Rivaldo tries to clip Numancia's goalie, Manuel.

Celta Vigo 3 Valencia 2 Espanyol 1 Valladolid 0, Numancia 1 Barcelona 1, Osasuna 3 Malaga 3, Rayo Vallecano 0 Real Oviedo 2, Real Mallorca 1 Real Madrid 0, Real Sociedad 1 Alaves 1, Real Zaragoza 2 Athletic Bilbao 2, Villarreal 4 Racing Santander 2, Las Palmas 2 Deportivo Coruna 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Real Madrid	27	17	5	5	60	30	56
2. Deportivo	27	15	6	6	52	31	51
3. Valencia	27	14	7	6	43	21	49
4. Barcelona	27	13	7	7	55	38	46
5. Real Mallorca	27	12	9	6	37	33	45
6. Villarreal	27	12	6	9	38	32	42
7. Alaves	27	11	6	10	39	34	39
8. Malaga	27	11	5	11	44	42	38
9. Celta Vigo	27	10	8	9	35	38	38
10. Espanyol	27	10	6	11	34	30	36
11. Ath. Bilbao	27	9	9	9	36	39	36
12. Las Palmas	27	10	5	12	28	43	35
13. R. Vallecano	27	8	10	9	45	46	34
14. Real Zaragoza	27	7	11	9	38	39	32
15. Valladolid	27	7	11	9	30	32	32
16. Real Oviedo	27	9	4	14	35	48	31
17. Numancia	27	7	6	14	27	46	27
18. Real Sociedad	27	6	7	14	29	55	25
19. Osasuna	27	5	9	13	30	43	24
20. R. Santander	27	6	5	16	32	47	23

WORLD LEAGUES

PORTUGESE TOP SIX

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Boavista	25	16	7	2	46	14	55
2. Sporting	24	15	3	6	45	26	48
3. Braga	25	13	8	4	40	28	47
4. Porto	23	14	3	6	44	20	45
5. Benfica	25	13	5	7	42	28	44
6. Belenenses	25	11	6	8	28	23	39

BELGIUM FIRST DIVISION

Club Bruges 1 Eendracht Aalst 1, Mechelen 2 Harelbeke 0, Ghent 2 Anderlecht 1, Standard Liege 4 Beveren 2, Lokeren 1 Charleroi 0, Excelsior Mouscron 3 Antwerp 2, Genk 2 Lierse 0, Germinal Beerschot 1 Sint-Truiden 0, La Louviere 3 Westerlo 1.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Anderlecht	26	20	5	1	70	21	65
2. Club Bruges	26	17	8	1	67	20	59
3. Standard Liege	26	13	9	4	61	31	48
4. Ghent	26	13	7	6	48	36	46
5. Mouscron	26	13	5	8	51	34	44
6. Lokeren	26	12	7	7	39	32	43
7. G. Beerschot	26	13	3	10	47	37	42
8. Westerlo	26	12	6	8	47	40	42
9. Charleroi	26	11	4	11	40	46	37
10. Lierse	26	10	6	10	35	32	36
11. Genk	26	8	7	11	31	36	31
12. Beveren	26	8	7	11	24	49	31
13. Antwerp	26	8	4	14	29	38	28
14. Aalst	26	6	6	14	26	53	24
15. Harelbeke	26	6	2	18	29	68	20
16. Sint-Truiden	26	4	6	16	24	44	18
17. La Louviere	26	3	9	14	22	46	18
18. Mechelen	26	3	7	16	31	58	16

SCOTTISH PREMIER LEAGUE

Dundee 0 Hearts 0, Dundee United 1 Aberdeen 1, Dunfermline Athletic 2 Hibernian 1, Motherwell 1 Rangers 2, St Mirren 1 St Johnstone 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Celtic	30	25	4	1	77	23	79
2. Rangers	30	21	3	6	58	28	66
3. Hibernian	31	17	9	5	52	23	60
4. Kilmarnock	30	13	6	11	34	39	45
5. Hearts	31	12	7	12	48	43	43
6. D. Athletic	31	11	7	13	30	45	40
7. Dundee	30	10	7	13	42	37	37
8. Motherwell	31	10	6	15	36	45	36
9. Aberdeen	29	7	11	11	30	41	32
10. St Johnstone	30	7	10	13	30	44	31
11. D. United	30	4	7	19	26	53	19
12. St Mirren	31	5	3	23	20	62	18

DUTCH FIRST DIVISION

Ajax Amsterdam 9 Sparta Rotterdam 0, RKC Waalwijk 3 Willem II Tilburg 2, NEC Nijmegen 1 Groningen 0, PSV Eindhoven 5 Utrecht 1, Feyenoord 5 Twente Enschede 1, NAC Breda 2 Heerenveen 2, Roda JC Kerkrade 3 Graafschap Doetinchem 1, AZ Alkmaar 0 Fortuna Sittard 2, RBC Roosendaal 0 Vitesse Arnhem 3.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. PSV	25	18	6	1	54	15	60
2. Feyenoord	25	18	2	5	54	23	56
3. Ajax	25	15	5	5	69	30	50
4. Roda JC	25	13	5	7	45	30	44
5. Waalwijk	25	12	8	5	34	22	44
6. Vitesse Arnhem	25	12	7	6	44	36	43
7. Willem II	25	10	7	8	45	37	37
8. Utrecht	24	10	5	9	40	39	35
9. Nijmegen	25	7	13	5	32	30	34
10. Heerenveen	24	7	10	7	30	31	31
11. NAC Breda	25	8	7	10	31	37	31
12. T. Enschede	25	7	8	10	36	48	29
13. Groningen	25	7	7	11	30	37	28
14. AZ Alkmaar	25	7	6	12	35	50	27
15. S. Rotterdam	25	5	5	15	35	56	20
16. Fortuna Sittard	25	4	6	15	18	48	18
17. Graafschap	25	5	2	18	29	55	17
18. Roosendaal	25	4	1	20	31	69	13

QANTAS
THE SPIRIT OF AUSTRALIA

National Soccer League

	TOTAL							HOME						AWAY					
	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS	P	W	D	L	F	A	P	W	D	L	F	A
SOUTH MELBOURNE	23	15	5	3	48	18	50	11	9	2	0	28	6	12	6	3	3	20	12
SYDNEY OLYMPIC	23	15	4	4	44	23	49	11	8	2	1	22	9	12	7	2	3	22	14
WOLLONGONG WOLVES	22	14	5	3	60	31	47	12	8	3	1	37	17	10	6	2	2	23	13
PERTH GLORY	23	13	7	3	60	30	46	12	9	2	1	35	9	11	4	5	2	25	21
MARCONI STALLIONS	23	11	5	7	36	30	38	12	7	2	3	24	17	11	4	3	4	12	12
MELBOURNE KNIGHTS	23	11	4	8	45	37	37	11	6	2	3	22	14	12	5	2	5	23	23
ADELAIDE CITY FORCE	22	10	3	9	39	43	33	11	5	2	4	26	25	11	5	1	5	13	18
SYDNEY UNITED	23	9	5	9	34	42	32	11	6	3	2	17	16	12	3	2	7	17	29
FOOTBALL KINGZ	23	8	6	9	34	34	30	11	5	3	3	19	12	12	3	3	6	15	22
NORTHERN SPIRIT	23	8	5	10	33	32	29	12	4	3	5	14	12	11	4	2	5	19	21
PARRAMATTA POWER	23	9	2	12	32	38	29	11	4	1	6	17	20	12	5	1	6	15	18
CANBERRA COSMOS	23	8	4	11	34	36	28	11	4	2	5	17	16	12	4	2	6	17	20
BRISBANE STRIKERS	23	7	6	10	39	43	27	11	6	3	2	27	17	12	1	3	8	12	26
NEWCASTLE UNITED	23	4	8	11	24	46	20	12	3	2	7	9	20	11	1	6	4	15	23
EASTERN PRIDE	23	4	5	14	28	38	0*	12	2	5	4	15	17	12	2	0	10	13	19

Matches played against Carlton will result in all teams being awarded a 3-0 win and 3 competition points

*All points deducted due to breach of NSL Regulations — subject to appeal

WOLLONGONG WOLVES 9
(Reid 28, Petrovski 41, 98 & 60, Young 25 & 65, Chipperfield 43 & 18, Blake 54)

NEWCASTLE UNITED 4
(Masi 49 & 87, Juchniewicz 81, Mansley 90)

Venue: WIN Stadium. **Crowd:** 4,777. **Referee:** S. Micallef.
Cautions: Harper (NU) 74.

Teams: WOLLONGONG WOLVES: Barlow, Souris, Ceccoli, Horsley, Reid, Petrovski, Young, Chipperfield, Huxley, Blake, Middleby, Stanton, Cervinski, Mennilo, Beltrame.
NEWCASTLE UNITED: Catlin, Kemp, Zoricich, McManus, Sprod, Dodd, Buonavoglia, Surjan, Masi, Harper, Johnson, Juchniewicz, Mansley, Trpcevski, Swancott.

ADELAIDE CITY 4
(Hassell 29, Tunbridge 32 & 85, Lagati 67)

PERTH GLORY 6
(Edwards 17, Kovacevic tog, 26, Despotovski 37 pen, Miller 52, Mori 72, Carbone 80)

Venue: Hindmarsh Stadium. **Crowd:** 4,030. **Referee:** G. Connolly.

Teams: ADELAIDE CITY: Cagalj, Lagati, Kovacevic, Brain (Pantelis 66), Bucciarelli (Rees 85), Veart, Vidmar, Hassell, Tunbridge, Karlovic (Terminello 30), Pelosi.
PERTH GLORY: J. Petkovic, Deans, Miller, Naven, Harnwell, Pryce (Valle 87), Junior, Faria, Mori, Despotovski (Carbone 46), Edwards.

LEADING GOALSCORERS
After Round Twenty-three

B. DESPOTOVSKI	(Perth Glory)	16
D. MORI	(Perth Glory)	16
B. BURGESS	(Northern Spirit)	14
S. PETROVSKI	(W'gong Wolves)	14
A. THOMPSON	(Marconi/Carlton)	12
S. CHIPPERFIELD	(W'gong Wolves)	12

SYDNEY UNITED 2
(Menapi 49 & 75)

PARRAMATTA POWER 1
(Thompson 23)

Venue: Sydney United SC. **Crowd:** 3,860. **Referee:** M. Shield.
Cautions: J Vrkic (PP) 44.

Teams: SYDNEY UNITED: Hughes, Olic, Webb, Bilokapic, Arrarte, Pondeljak, Maric, Genc, Deur (Rastali 71), Menapi (Jordan 88), Awaritefe.
PARRAMATTA POWER: Pogliacomi, Barrett, Elrich, Tobin (Miller 77), Griffiths, Brown, Blagojevic, Thompson (Berry 86), Vrkic, Roodenburg (Thorpe 86), Bennett.

SOUTH MELBOURNE 1
(Boutsianis 81)

CANBERRA COSMOS 0

Venue: Bob Jane Stadium. **Crowd:** 5,028. **Referee:** E. Lennie.
Cautions: Anthopoulos (CC) 79.

Teams: SOUTH MELBOURNE: Petkovic, Iosifids, DeAmicis, Durakovic, Panopoulos, Coveny, Trimboli, Boutsianis, Vlahos, Lozanovski (Kalogeracos 60), Colosimo.
CANBERRA COSMOS: Smith, Anthopoulos, Popovich, Ravanello (Aliffi 76), Purdue, Hagger (Ivanic 71), Castro, Lyons, Scott (Cortes 52), Miyazawa, Kemp.

Player Of The Week

SASO PETROVSKI the Wolves prolific striker bagged a hat-trick in Wollongong's 9-4 demolition of Newcastle United.

FOOTBALL KINGZ 1
(Ngata 87)

MARCONI STALLIONS 0

Venue: Westpac Trust Stadium. **Crowd:** 13,111. **Referee:** C. Diomis.
Cautions: Farah (MS) 43, Renaud (MS) 57, Costanzo (MS) 88.

Teams: FOOTBALL KINGZ: Cuello, Lines, Osman, Rufer, Davis, Bluhm (Urlovic 77), Ibrahim (Ngata 77), Campbell, Cartwright (Van Steeden 86), Douglas, Burton.
MARCONI STALLIONS: Aceski, Babic (Radulovic 62), Costanzo, Longo, Afkos, Farah, Brownlie (Tome 79), Gibson, Renaud, Bell, Trajanovski (Care 83).

SYDNEY OLYMPIC 2
(Marusic 54, Owens 79)

BRISBANE STRIKERS 0

Venue: Belmore SG. **Crowd:** 5,472. **Referee:** M. Breeze
Cautions: Foster (BS), 54, McKain (BS) 63, Carle (SO) 89.

Teams: SYDNEY OLYMPIC: Bolton: Baillie, Juric, Collina, Wilson, Marusic (Owens 77), Goutzioulis (Parisi 84), Halpin, Augerinos, McAllister, Cardozo (Carle 77).
BRISBANE STRIKERS: Baldock, North, McKain, McLaren, Stefanutto, Pilic, Srhoj, Rech, Grierson, Foster (Smeltz 79), Buljan.

EASTERN PRIDE 2
(Sekulovski 23 pen, Fak 90)

MELBOURNE KNIGHTS 2
(Kiratzoglou 53, Da Costa 55)

Venue: Mobil Park. **Crowd:** 1,161 **Referee:** B. Hugo.
Cautions: Da Costa (MK) 32, Goti[illegible]P), 33. Porter (MK) 47, Kim (EP) 53, Katz (EP) 71.

Teams: EASTERN PRIDE: Galekovic, Fak, Gotis, Ki Kim, Deak, Katz (Buhagiar 81), Hutchinson, Sekulovski, Wearne, Atkinson, Motsiopoulos (Pardo 67).
MELBOURNE KNIGHTS: Acevski, Vasilevski, Vargas, Ognenovski, Porter, Kiratzoglou, Vargas (Vukadin 73), Da Costa (Pelihan 89), Horvat (Jolic 25), Marth, Lapsansky.

ROUND 24

FRIDAY MARCH 23

Newcastle United ..... vs ..... Perth Glory
Wollongong Wolves ..... vs ..... South Melbourne
Canberra Cosmos ..... vs ..... Sydney United

SATURDAY MARCH 24

Marconi Stallions ..... vs ..... Northern Spirit

SUNDAY MARCH 25

Brisbane Strikers ..... vs ..... Eastern Pride
Melbourne Knights ..... vs ..... Football Kingz
Parramatta Power ..... vs ..... Sydney Olympic
Adelaide City Force ..... vs ..... Wollongong Wolves

Adelaide City Force - Bye

NORTHERN SPIRIT
BYE